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THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

Screenplay by

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Based on the Story by

Edgar Allan Poe

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INT. CRYPT--DAY

A cross carved in stone. Title: TOLEDO, SPAIN 1492

Thick rope and metal clamps are thrown onto the stone surface.

Two men attach the clamps to the edges of a stone slab. One is a gaunt, pale man with a painful limp, MENDOZA, the torturer. His death's-head face is scarred from small deep cuts along the brow. He is joined by a round, fat face atop a dirty, fat body--his assistant, GOMEZ. Mendoza tugs on the rope when they're through, then looks--

--to a barefooted man dressed in unassuming monk's robes but whose face is radiant with power. TOMAS DE TORQUEMADA, the Grand Inquisitor of Spain, nods--

--to a huge man, LOBO, the executioner, who pulls on an end of the rope--

--which rolls through a SQUEALING pulley in the ceiling--

--and lifts, pull by pull, the cross-carved stone slab.

Fear and awe run through a small crowd assembled in the crypt: a number of nobles, of both sexes, dressed in gold-trimmed black finery with white ruffled collars. The nobles raise white lace kerchiefs to their mouths and noses. One noblewoman, the CONTESSA D'ALBA MOLINA, weeps into her kerchief. She holds a young BOY's hand and is comforted by an old man, CESAR, a retainer.

From a WIDE SHOT of their view, ZOOM IN as the lid is lifted off. Mendoza and Gomez step forward and look into the tomb, and we look with them.

We see a mummified corpse, its skin stretched and pitted, torn and black across white bone, with patches of hair on the head and face, and from the nose. The hands are crossed on its chest.

The men reach into the tomb. Their hands cradle the dusty, fragile corpse.

Black-robed and hatted, DR. HUESOS, the Inquisition's surgeon, looms over Gomez' shoulder.

DR. HUESOS
Be careful.

GOMEZ
(wryly) I promise I won't hurt him.

Mendoza grunts and frowns at him. They set grimly to their task.

A knight in full armor, lying in profile, is carved along the side of the sarcophagus. Above it they lift the brittle body, stretched out whole.

There is a collective gasp from nobles. The Contessa prays, nervously fingering a long, ornate, jeweled rosary from which hangs a gold crucifix.

Mendoza and Gomez carefully carry the body away from the sarcophagus.

Lobo flings the rope from him--

--and the stone lid falls, with a CRASH, back onto the tomb.

The bearers present the rotting cadaver repectfully to Torquemada. Behind him stands FRANCESCO, the Inquisition's scribe. An officious young man, he carries a large book under his arm. Torquemada looks down, with a hint of sneering satisfaction, at the tattered corpse, then to the assembled.

TORQUEMADA
Satan is everpresent among us.
Every sin in deed, word or thought,
no matter how long forgotten, must
be truly confessed, and punished.
Don Alfonso d'Alba Molina, the Holy
Inquisition finds you guilty of heresy.

The weeping woman can't stand it, as her boy stands bravely by.

CONTESSA
No!

The old man restrains her.

Torquemada glares at her, as, with a swift sweep of a pointing finger he motions for Mendoza and Gomez to dispose of the body. They lift it gently and carry it away.

The torturers lay the corpse on the floor. Gomez gingerly takes one of its arms and lifts it off the corpse's chest and over its head. It audibly creaks, but holds.

Gomez takes the other arm, gently, pulls it from the chest--and it breaks off from the body, coming free in his hand.

Mendoza bites his lip and glowers at his assistant.

Gomez, the arm still in his hand, shrugs sheepishly, then ties the rope, freed from the slab, to the arm still attached to the corpse. Not sure what to do with the free arm, he ties that up, too.

The monk gives the scribe and authoritarian nod, and Francesco steps forward.

FRANCESCO
Don Alfonso d'Alba Molina, for questioning the Holy Inquisition's right to the property of the condemned, as revealed in this letter to the Bishop of Toledo--

He produces a letter from the large volume and hold it up for all to see.

CONTESSA
That was a hundred years ago.

FRANCESCO (cont)
--and by the taint of impurity in your blood, your wealth and the wealth of your heirs is forfeit to the Church--

CESAR
(to Torquemada) Thief!

The monk stares willfully at him, the Contessa, and her stalwart son.

FRANCESCO
--and you are sentenced to twenty lashes.

Lobo pulls the rope, with little effort this time--

and the pathetic corpse rises off the ground. The body hangs, dusty, lifeless, by the rope. Mendoza steps up to it, shakes out his flail, a multi-thonged whip at the end of a stiff shaft. With the total concentration of a man who believes in his work, he flogs the corpse.

The first stroke tears into the leathery flesh of the body's back, pulling it away from the ribs.

The crowd gasps. The woman groans and sinks to her knees, crying, praying. Only now does the boy start to cry, and pray, too.

Mendoza brings down the second stroke--

--which knocks the shriveled heart from the body.

One of the nobles, DON CARLO DE LEON, Captain of the Civil Guard, a fat, pompous soldier, is impressed.

DON CARLO
Well stroked, Master Mendoza.

But the torturer is too intent on his work to acknowledge compliments. He strokes again--and the head falls off.

Lobo, smiling, holds the rope with one hand as the power of the blows jerks and yanks it around.

Blow after blow, coming faster now as Mendoza warms to his work, knocks away chunks of flesh, ribs, a leg--

The Contessa prays through her sobbing, the old man's hand on her shoulder.

Nobles' eyes, men and women, flash with sadistic pleasure above their covered mouths.

Torquemada stands implacable, staring at the crowd.

--until at last the body breaks away from the hanging arm and falls on the floor. Mendoza steps over it and beats the fallen corpse to pieces, then beats the pieces. At twenty he stops, and steps away from his handiwork, a little short of breath from the exertion. He coils his flail.

Francesco makes an entry in the book, then snaps it closed.

The rope looks ridiculous, two dead arms hanging from it, as Gomez lowers it.

With a SQUEAKING of wheels, a low cart is rolled into the crypt carrying a giant stone mortar. Lobo presses all his bulk to the task of pulling it.

Gomez picks up the pieces of the corpse and throws them into the mortar.

Dr. Huesos picks up the head, measures it, and makes a supercilious claim.

DR. HUESOS
See the large forehead? Clearly a Jew.

CESAR
The Pope will hear of this.

Don Carlo shuts him up--with the flat of his swordblade against his chest. He shakes his head at the old man.

DON CARLO
The Pope is in Rome.

Gomez unties the dangling arms and tosses them into the mortar as the surgeon tosses in the head.

Lobo lifts a huge club, and using it as a pestle, smashes the remains of the corpse, crushing the skull and bones, grinding it to powder.

TORQUEMADA
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

He makes the sign of the cross--

--as Mendoza produces a large, oversized hourglass. He opens the top, and Lobo, in a show of prodigious strength, lifts the mortar and pours the dust that is all that remains of Don Alfonso into the empty hourglass. Mendoza closes it, and gives it to Torquemada.

Torquemada surveys the assembled audience. They are aghast at what they have seen.

With a glint of fire in his eye and a dramatic sweep of his arm, he turns the hourglass over and slams it down on the sarcophagus. The dust runs through it, showing the passing of time.

TORQUEMADA
Man's time on earth is brief, but his soul will live forever in heaven--or in the pit of hell.

CUT TO

CREDITS

EXT. TOWN--DAWN

Dawn streaks red across the narrow, uneven streets and rough stone buildings of Toledo. A large, implacable fortress looms over the town like a threat. A cock CROWS.

CUT TO

INT. BAKERY--DAWN

The cock CROWS again. Hands knead a mound of dough. MARIA, a stunning, angelic beauty, beats the dough with her delicate fist. Suddenly hands reach up and around from behind her and knead her breasts. She looks surprised at first, then scolding.

MARIA
Antonio!

A head appears over her shoulder. It is ANTONIO, the baker, her husband. He is still caressing her breasts.

ANTONIO
I need you.

She relents, smiling a newlywed's smile, open, innocent, loving. They kiss.

She is an angel, but a passionate one, and she fires the passion in him. In their ardor, they tumble over onto bags of flour in a corner. They embrace passionately, though flour rises from the rough bags and pours onto them from an open one. They don't even notice, as their desire moves them to the point of lovemaking.

Suddenly, Antonio's head rises slightly, and he sniffs.

The oven smokes.

ANTONIO
The bread is burning.

She cares only for their love.

MARIA
Let it burn.

He wants to give in to their passion--but he pulls away, gasping.

ANTONIO
Maria, I'm the baker now.

MARIA
And my husband.

ANTONIO
We have our whole lives to love each other, but the bread is burning now.

She knows he is right. His face shows his frustration, but only for a second, as he jumps up and runs to the smoking oven.

Antonio opens a hammered metal door, on a ROARING fire. He pushes in a large wooden lifter, and pulls out several steaming, perfect loaves of bread. Frustrated and angry, he tosses the hot loaves into an empty wicker basket.

The wood and stone bakery is small, but neat and efficient. Stairs lead to a loft where the young couple lives.

From somewhere in the town, a BELL tolls. Maria kneels, makes the sign of the cross, folds her hands in front of her and prays.

Antonio drops a hot loaf in the basket, and makes the sign of the cross. Then he sees his wife, praying, a touching, beautiful sight.

ANTONIO
My angel. Pray that we sell all this bread.

MARIA
I'm praying for your father's soul.

He takes her hands in his.

ANTONIO
His soul will rest when we pay our debts. This shop was his life; we have to keep it for him.

MARIA
Not even the Inquisition could take it from us.

Antonio puts a hand to her lips.

ANTONIO
That's heresy. If anyone heard you say that--

A "BANG!" of wood hitting wood. They turn their heads sharply--

--to see the shop door open and three stunted BEGGARS enter. They are twisted, scarred, all missing the better parts of both legs, two waddling on stumpy crutches, one scooting on a flat board.

FIRST BEGGAR
Pity a poor hungry beggar!

SECOND BEGGAR
I lost my legs at the glorious battle of Granada! I ask only a loaf of bread.

Antonio steps between them and the baskets of loaves.

ANTONIO
Not today. Go bother the butcher.

FIRST BEGGAR
That pig?

THIRD BEGGAR
Please, baker! My family is starving.

They crowd him, focussed on the baskets brimmed with brown loaves.

Antonio feels guilty, but holds firm.

ANTONIO
We have to <u>sell</u> this.

FIRST BEGGAR
Your father always gave us bread.

Maria appears beside him, putting her hand in his. She hands him a loaf from the basket. He sighs, mad at himself for being so weak, though he knows it's the right thing to do. He turns to the beggars and tears the loaf into three pieces, giving one to each.

ANTONIO
Just this one...

FIRST BEGGAR
Bless you, boy.

The Second Beggar says nothing, but eats furiously, like an animal.

THIRD BEGGAR
You're a true Christian.

BUTCHER (OS)
You're a fool!

In the doorway is a wide man, Jorge, the BUTCHER, wearing a leather apron streaked with wet blood stains.

BUTCHER (cont)
You may as well feed the rats.

He kicks one of the beggars, as they scurry out the door.

FIRST BEGGAR
Pig!

Antonio goes back to work, sliding a lifter full of loaved dough into the oven, then closing the oven door.

MARIA
Buenos diaz.

BUTCHER
I've been slaughtering sheep all morning. A loaf, a big one.

MARIA
One peseta.

She hands him a loaf; he takes a huge bite from it, then talks with his mouth full. We can hear the flies BUZZ around him.

BUTCHER
Just come across the street to my shop. I'll give you a sausage.

He laughs grossly.

Antonio is at her shoulder.

ANTONIO
One peseta, Jorge, now.

The butcher stops laughing, reaches in an apron pocket and hands him a blood-smeared coin. Maria returns to making more dough.

Through the door comes a middle-aged woman CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER
Two loaves, please.

Antonio chooses two and gives them to her. She examines them closely, measuring, smelling, poking.

BUTCHER
(to Antonio) Your new wife is good stock.

He slaps his thighs.

ANTONIO
You <u>are</u> a swine, Jorge.

The customer hands back one of the two loaves, as horse HOOVES and carriage WHEELS RUMBLE to a halt on the stones outside.

CUSTOMER
This one's burnt.

A finely but ostentatiously dressed merchant, Senor QUINTANA, enters.

Antonio, handing the woman another loaf, does not look pleased to see him.

QUINTANA
A loaf of your best bread, boy.

ANTONIO
We only sell the best, Senor Quintana.

He hands one to the merchant, who breaks off a piece and wipes the horseshit from his fancy boot with it, then throws it out the door.

QUINTANA
The streets are filthy.

He tosses a coin to Antonio.

BUTCHER
From the auto da fe yesterday. There was a huge crowd. I didn't see you there, Antonio.

ANTONIO
We didn't go.

BUTCHER
A shame. They burned thirteen witches. A baker's dozen.

He laughs and chews. Antonio frowns. Maria grimaces as she shapes the dough.

QUINTANA
Not attending an auto da fe is practically heresy. All good Christians should support the work of the Inquisition.

BUTCHER
You should have seen Lobo, the giant. He broke the Countess d'Alba Molina's neck with one twist.

He demonstrates on his bread.

CUSTOMER
She must have paid a pretty peseta for that. Mercy doesn't come cheap.

ANTONIO
Mercy? Breaking her neck?

CUSTOMER
Would you rather be burned <u>alive</u>?

She hands over two coins and leaves.

ANTONIO
Thank you, senora.

BUTCHER
You should have gone. Business was excellent. Everyone wanted to eat pig--to prove they weren't Jews.

This is too much for Maria, who pounds the mound of dough in front of her and turns, livid, on the butcher.

MARIA
How can you make money on the suffering of those poor people?

QUINTANA
That's how fortunes are made. Is this your bride, Antonio?

He walks to where she works. Antonio tries to explain her outburst.

ANTONIO
Suffering--even the suffering of heretics--upsets her.

QUINTANA
Charming--dangerous, but charming.

He admires her, clearly desires her. But she is impervious to his leering.

MARIA
God teaches us to be merciful, not savage.

QUINTANA
Then let me show you mercy.

He takes her hand, and genteelly kisses it, but finds it covered with sticky dough, which he has to wipe from his lips and gloves, with difficulty.

QUINTANA (cont)
I know you are poor, (to Antonio) and I know your father suffered, trying to make this worthless hovel into a bakery.

ANTONIO
If it was worthless, why did you
offer to buy it from him?

He breaks open a loaf and sticks his face in it, inhaling deeply.

QUINTANA
Because I love the smell of bread.
I make you the same offer.

ANTONIO
The shop is not for sale.

QUINTANA
Without your father, the bakery
will fail. You're still an apprentice.

ANTONIO
I'm the master now.

QUINTANA
You're a debtor. You owe the miller,
the doctor, the undertaker--

ANTONIO
And I'll pay them.

The merchant stands between Antonio and Maria, who works off her feelings on the dough.

QUINTANA
Let me pay them for you. You
and your wife can stay on just
as you were--and work for me.
I will be the master.

Behind him, unseen to Antonio, he squeezes Maria's rear--in earnest.

She "YELP"s, surprised, and in a reflexive reaction, without thinking, grabs the dough and hits him over the head with it. Stunned, he falls forward.

Maria, appalled by her act of violence, reaches down to him.

MARIA
Senor, I'm sorry!

She places her flour-covered hands on him, leaving big white smudges.

QUINTANA
Stop it, you witch! You're filthy.

Antonio wants to kill him for that, but gets a better idea. He grabs the open bag of flour that spilled on them before, in their passion.

ANTONIO
You want to be a baker, senor.
Then here--

He tosses the bag to Quintana, who catches it, and is covered by the cloud of flour that plumes from the open end.

ANTONIO (cont)
--with our compliments. Learn
the trade.

The butcher hides his laughter.

QUINTANA
I'm supposed to see the Bishop
this morning!

ANTONIO
Then by all means, go!

He grabs him, drags him to the door and throws him out.

EXT. STREET--DAY

He rolls in the street, and comes up smeared with brown as well as white, holding the piece of bread he used before to wipe the manure from his boot.

QUINTANA
By Christ I swear, I'll have your
shop, boy!

INT. BAKERY--DAY

BUTCHER
That was foolish, Antonio. He's
an influential man.

ANTONIO
He's a beggar--only he's not as honest as the others.

He hears SOBBING. It's Maria, still on her knees, praying. He lifts her up.

MARIA
God, forgive me. He grabbed me and I--I hit him.

ANTONIO
God forgive me for <u>not</u> hitting him.

MARIA
I'm as bad as they are.

ANTONIO
You're an angel.

CUT TO

INT. BAKERY LOFT--NIGHT

Moonlight lies on the innocent, lovely face of Maria, sleeping. Her head lowers softly in her sleep, and Antonio beside her responds in his by reaching across and holding her close.

"BANG!" Something HAMMERS into wood, below, and the dark air is full of CLATTERING and SMASHING. Maria and Antonio wake, shocked, confused, the darkness dizzy around them.

QUINTANA (OS)
Up the stairs--in the back.

Antonio is out of bed in a shot, with a hand on Maria.

ANTONIO
Stay here!

MARIA
What is it?

Antonio grabs a rolling pin from a table by the bed, goes to the head of the stairs--

--and is immediately attacked by uniformed GUARDS, with swords drawn. He beats back one with the rolling pin, sending him falling down the stairs into another.

GUARDS
It's her creature! Where's the witch?

Others rush up to the attack. Antonio swordfights with one, using the pin to parry the blows, until he kicks the attacker back, through the loft railing into the table below.

Maria cringes in the bed, unsure of what is happening.

MARIA
Who are they? What do they want?

Antonio tumbles in the dark with yet another guard, ending up on top--only to be battered on the back of the head by a sword-hilt wielded by a large man in a fancy uniform, Don Carlo, Captain of the Guard. Antonio crumples; the fighting stops. A guard lights a candle.

When Maria sees Antonio lifted, hurt, to his knees by the guards, she rushes to him.

MARIA (cont)
Antonio!

DON CARLO
Senor! Identify the witch.

Quintana appears up the stairs. He points at Maria, then Antonio.

QUINTANA
She's the witch.

DON CARLO
Gash her, before she casts a spell on us.

A guard grabs her, pulls her head back by the hair. Another draws his dagger and cuts her forehead.

Antonio, his senses retruning, is alert enough to see this.

ANTONIO
Stop it! Leave her alone!

He fights against the guards who hold him, and is pummeled for his efforts.

QUINTANA
He's her creature. They killed his father to get control of the shop.

The butcher, in his nightdress, speaks from below, at the door of the shop.

BUTCHER
And she defended the witches who burned at the last auto da fe. I heard her.

DON CARLO
I, Don Carlo de Leon, Captain of the Civil Guard, arrest you on the charge of witchcraft. Take them away.

MARIA
No! We did nothing!

Quintana's face curdles in a wicked, superior smile at them as they're dragged down the stairs.

ANTONIO
Let her go! They're lying!

They are pulled, protesting, past Jorge, out the shop door. He shakes his head, almost pitying them.

BUTCHER
Fools.

CUT TO

EXT. PLAZA--NIGHT

They are marched through the town plaza, eerily moonlit, empty, lifeless.

Antonio, flanked by guards, a sword at his back, is led first, then Maria, escorted by two leering guards who handle her roughly, with pleasure.

To one side is a wooden platform. A large banner hangs over it, fluttering in the night breeze. On it is a green cross draped in black.

On their other side are the ashen remnants of a fire, spread around a charred stake.

They hear MOANING, and pass a figure locked in standing stocks. It is Cesar, the old retainer, dressed in a ridiculous, yellow harlequin-esque fool's costume with a red cross on the chest.

ANTONIO
Don't look, Maria.

But she cannot help as they pass. The old man hangs by his wrists from the stocks, exhausted, in pain, and we can see the effects of his torture--his hands have no fingers left.

Maria gasps, then looks up--

--at the castle in the darkness, a forbidding fortress, rising above her.

GUARD
Two days in there and your piss will come out your eyes, witch.

CUT TO

INT. CASTLE--NIGHT

The dark gate opens and they enter. Maria shudders as she crosses the portal. The gate closes behind them, with a resounding SLAM. Once inside, the Guards take liberties. One grabs Maria's breast roughly and smears her lips with a kiss.

GUARD
God is my witness, I am not responsible for my lust. The witch has charmed me.

The other Guards laugh.

ANTONIO
Stop it! I'll kill you!

This comment they find hilarious. The Guard pulls away from Maria, spits in her face, then wheels and punches Antonio in the stomach, doubling him over. New laughter erupts as they haul the two prisoners in opposite directions, down separate halls.

MARIA
Antonio!

Through his gasping, breathless pain, Antonio call back to her.

ANTONIO
I'll come for you.

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

Antonio is dragged down a dark, torch-lit hall to a thick wooden door. It is opened and he is thrown in.

INT. DUNGEON, MEN'S CELL--NIGHT

The door is slammed shut behind him as he tumbles onto the rock-and-dirt floor. He rolls past a little man, PICO, a dwarf in jester's motley who sits against a wall. The dwarf jumps up, runs to the door and beats on it, yelling up through the barred viewing slot.

PICO
Wait! You can't do this! There are too many of us in here already.

Antonio is on his feet, pushing the dwarf aside, screaming out the slot.

ANTONIO
If you hurt her, I'll kill you!

Pico breaks into a high-pitched laughter. Antonio turns on him.

ANTONIO (cont)
Why are you laughing?

PICO
That's funny, you threatening them. You see, that's what they do here, hurt people. It's their job.

Antonio, suddenly weary, his head hurting, slumps against the door.

PICO (cont)
They must expect one of us to die soon, or they wouldn't have crammed you in here. Probably the moor.

He nods toward a corner of the small stone cell with a narrow barred window high overhead. There are no beds. A black man, ABDUL, sits cowering against the wall, half-whimpering, half-chanting. He looks up and Antonio sees that he is wearing a bloody eyepatch over his left eye.

PICO (cont)
They made him a cyclops last time.

He puts a finger in his mouth and one to his eye, flicking them both outward. The one in his mouth makes a "pop."

PICO (cont)
Next time--(shrugs) They actually think he was the Caliph of Granada. Then again, it could be the Englishman--

He points to the other corner, where along the wall a blond ENGLISHMAN lies, shivering spasmodically, yet silently.

PICO (cont)
--but I've been expecting him to die for days, and he simply refuses. I think he likes it here.

He shoos several rats away from a battered tin plate of slimy, greasy chunks of hard, black meat.

PICO (cont)
I think it's the food.

He offers a chunk to Antonio, who waves it away, uninterested.

PICO (cont)
A man of taste, I see. I won't eat it either. They salt it so heavily, it makes you fever with thirst. Then, of course, they piss in water. Still, it's better than English food.

He throws a chunk at the rats lurking in a shadow. They attack it, fight over it.

Pico laughs at their savagery, and his joke.

ANTONIO
They can't keep us here. It's a mistake.

PICO
The Inquisition doesn't make mistakes.

ANTONIO
They said my wife is a witch. It's not true.

PICO
It will become true when you confess it.

He bursts into laughter again, and throws another piece to the rats--

--who have become frenzied in their fighting, frightening Abdul.

CUT TO

INT. INQUISITION'S SUPREME COUNCIL CHAMBER--DAY

Under a gold cross, three men in white robes with tall pointed white hoods sit at a large, carved wooden table.

At one end of the table sits Francesco, the large volume open before him, quill pen poised to write. At the other sits Dr. Huesos. Behind the table stands Don Carlo. The central robed figure speaks--in Torquemada's voice.

TORQUEMADA
Take her clothes off.

Don Carlo nods to two Guards who roughly but routinely tear Maria's dress and garments off. She cries out and resists.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
To resist is proof of guilt.

Defiant tears in her eyes, she stops fighting, then is naked before them.

MARIA
I swear by all the saints that I am not a witch.

The men at the table clearly admire her beauty. Torquemada suffers a surge of conflicting emotions: desire, fear, admiration, loathing, love, hate. He manages to contain them--just manages.

TORQUEMADA
Let the examination begin.

The two hooded men on either side of Torquemada rise, with Dr. Huesos, and stand before her, circle her, eyeing her closely. Francesco stays at his book, Torquemada tensely in his seat.

Maria trembles fearfully, indignantly, especially when the large robed man strokes her back, ostensibly searching for a mark, but clearly enjoying himself. We will learn later that he is a BISHOP.

BISHOP
What are we looking for exactly, surgeon?

Dr. Huesos presses one of her nipples, then the other with the tip of a finger. He is having fun, with a serious face.

DR. HUESOS
Hidden charms, poisons, witch's marks. A third nipple, where Satan may suck, is a sure sign of sorcery. But any blemish may be a witch's mark.

The smaller Inquisitor holds up one of her arms, twisting it, and searches under her armpit. His manner is cruel; he does not mind causing her pain.

For a closer look, he puts a pair of thick-lensed spectacles up to the eyeholes of his robe. He is a PRIEST.

PRIEST
It may be as small as a pin-prick.

The Bishop strokes her buttocks.

BISHOP
Mm-hmm.

Torquemada watches all the while, staring yet never approaching. That would be too dangerous; he is unsure how he would react, especially if he touched her. But watching the others touch her...

The priest peers through his lenses over every pore of her stomach, his nose barely and inch from her flesh, lowering, lowering.

Behind her, the Bishop pulls the tall pointed hood from his head, closes his eyes, and inhales deeply, smelling her, a smile spreading across his face.

Maria is living a nightmare, hating it, but unable to awake. Tears trail down the twists in her tortured face. Throughout the "examination" she looks at Torquemada, mutely pleading to his power to stop this abuse.

Torquemada wipes the sweat from his hands on the sleeves of his robe.

The Bishop is now fondling her buttocks. The priest interrupts.

PRIEST
Excuse me, Your Eminence.

He pushes her torso forward, bending her over.

PRIEST (cont)
She could have put something evil inside her.

BISHOP
I wish to God she would. (to Torquemada) Come, Grand Inquisitor, join the hunt.

Torquemada's response is sharp, full of the conflict he feels.

TORQUEMADA
This is not sport, Your Eminence. We are defending the Church.

BISHOP
Of course.

Chastened, his manner turns serious. He puts his hood back on, bends down and scrutinizes her thigh. But he can't help himself--he has to run a finger down the back of it. He peeks to see if Torquemada is watching.

Thinking he is not being watched, the priest pinches Maria's back, hard. She winces, cries out. She is afraid, at first, to speak.

PRIEST
There! There's a mark!

MARIA
No!

The surgeon and Bishop gather to see.

BISHOP
There was no mark there before.

DR. HUESOS
It's fading.

PRIEST
She's working her sorcery.

FRANCESCO
(annoyed) Is there a mark or not?

PRIEST
Yes!

BISHOP
If it is, it is the only one. Otherwise, she's perfect.

Maria stares, pleading and accusing at once, at Torquemada.

TORQUEMADA
(angrily) Does she bear Satan's mark?

The Priest pinches her, hard, again.

PRIEST
See for yourself.

He turns her sideways and pulls her to the table, so Torquemada can see.

The thought of seeing, up close, for himself, excites and frightens Torquemada. He rises from his chair, almost involuntarily, and reaches, slowly across the table, his hand shaking, until he barely touches her.

His eyes sparkle from within the hood. His whole body quivers. Suddenly, he makes a sweeping turn and leaves the room, fast.

CUT TO

INT. TORQUEMADA'S ROOM--DAY

A door. There is a knock on it.

TORQUEMADA (OS)
Enter.

It is Mendoza. He hobbles in, closing the door behind him.

MENDOZA
Yes, Savior.

Torquemada kneels at a wooden table. On it stands a statue of the Virgin Mary set in a rough-hewn wooden altarpiece. Around the statue are half-burnt candles and a human skull. Beside the altarpiece stands the hourglass from the crypt, the dust of the old Duke running through it. Next to it sit a ceramic water pitcher and a bowl. Across the tabletop lies his peaked Inquisitor's hood.

The rest of the room is spare, ascetic, a monk's cell, lit by a small slit of a window. It has only a bed, no mattress, under a simple wooden crucifix.

Torquemada seems composed, but his face is sweating.

TORQUEMADA
I've told you not to call me that.

MENDOZA
Forgive me.

Mendoza lowers his head, ashamed.

Torquemada stands.

TORQUEMADA
Our Lord saved you. I merely showed you your sin.

MENDOZA
I was not worthy. I was damned.

Torquemada steps to him, grips his arms in support.

TORQUEMADA
You did your penance.

He makes the sign of the cross.

Without lifting his head, Mendoza makes the sign of the cross in return. We see that his hand has a hole in it, clean through, the size of a coin.

Torquemada takes his hand, looks at the hole with recognition, then into the cadaverous face of his master torturer.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I want you to do me a favor. No one must know.

MENDOZA
Anything.

Torquemada loosens his robe and lets it fall.

TORQUEMADA
Flog me.

The taciturn Mendoza is shocked.

MENDOZA
I cannot.

Torquemada grabs the pitcher and violently smashes it on the floor. Water runs along the cold stone floor amid the shards of the shattered pitcher.

TORQUEMADA
I command you.

MENDOZA
Please, Savior--

TORQUEMADA
I told you not to call me that. Now do as I say.

MENDOZA
But why?

TORQUEMADA
To help save me.

There is finality in his voice. As much as he resists the idea, Mendoza shakes out his flail.

Torquemada kneels on the sharp ceramic fragments. He grips the table, bracing for the blows. He looks into the face of the statue of the Virgin.

Reluctantly, Mendoza raises the whip, and forces himself to flog his "savior."

The blow cuts into Torquemada's back. He arches in pain, but keeps his grip. He prays, his eyes pressed shut, his face red and shaking.

TORQUEMADA
By the power of Christ--

IN HIS MIND he sees--

--Maria's back stroked by the Bishop--

TORQUEMADA (VO--cont)
--I compel thee.

--her breast touched by the Doctor--

Mendoza swings the whip again, each blow visibly hurting him as well.

Torquemada takes the blows stalwartly and keeps praying.

IN HIS MIND she looks at him, as she did in the council chamber, with defiance in her face, tears in her eyes--

--and suddenly she is dressed like the Virgin Mary, posed like the stature on his table.

He prays, tormented. Blood runs slowly on the wet stone floor.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
By the power of Christ --

Mendoza winces as he whips the monk, but now the blows come easier, faster. He grits his teeth.

So does Torquemada.

IN HIS MIND he sees her arm twisted by the Priest--

--the Bishop fondling her buttocks--

TORQUEMADA (VO--cont)
--I compel thee.

The flogging reaches a swift crescendo, then Mendoza, scared, stops.

Both breathe hard; tears line both faces. Torquemada's eyes are pressed shut.

IN HIS MIND he sees the Bishop run his finger down the back of Maria's thigh.

TORQUEMADA
Again.

Mendoza needs no convincing, and delivers quick, sharp lashes.

Torquemada has nearly reached his endurance. He looks up at the statue. A blow makes him close his eyes.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
By Christ's power I compel thee
to leave my thoughts!

IN HIS MIND he sees her across the table, when he reached to touch her.

His hand rises, reaches, toward the statue in his altar--

--toward Maria across the table--he touches her--

He falls prostrate on the floor. His sobbing subsides, stills.

Mendoza leans down, lifts his torso off the floor.

MENDOZA
Again?

TORQUEMADA
No.

He gets up, lifting and putting on his robe, the pain causing him difficulty. Mendoza helps him.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
No need. She is a witch.

CUT TO

INT. WOMEN'S CELL--DAY

The door opens and Maria, wearing only her shift, is thrown in. The Guard slams the door shut.

The cell is dark, much like the men's cell, maybe smaller, darker, dirtier. A rat scampers into a hole, frightened by Maria's rough entrance. Otherwise it seems empty.

Now that she is no longer under the scrutiny of the lecherous and sadistic men of the Supreme Council, she shakes with sobbing.

Wrinkled, weathered hands reach for her unseen, stretch to her head, touch the still-bleeding wound. Maria, surprised, looks up--

--into the wrinkled, weathered face of an old woman, ESMERELDA.

ESMERELDA
Cracked your egg, eh?

Maria recoils, scrambles back a bit, wary.

Esmerelda seems benign enough, though her anger is rising.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Searched you for "marks", too, didn't they. Laid their filthy, lecherous hands all over you. Well, don't you be ashamed.

MARIA
I'm ashamed for them, that men could do that.

This sensitive and generous spirit surprises Esmerelda, and intrigues her.

ESMERELDA
You're a different sort. (her natural cynicism resurfacing) Wait 'til you see what they're really capable of.

Maria winces at the pain in her head, putting a hand to it.

The old woman notices, looks concerned, and takes on a motherly tone.

ESMERELDA
I know just the thing. There must be one here somewhere...

She jumps up and searches the cell, sharp-eyed. In a corner she finds a spider web. She brushes the spider away, then grabs the web, rolling it in her hands as she returns to Maria.

MARIA
What are you doing?

ESMERELDA
Spider web, to stop the bleeding.

She reaches out to put it on Maria's wound. Maria grabs her forearm, refusing the help.

MARIA
No, thank you.

But Maria feels woozy, wobbly. Esmerelda takes advantage of Maria's moment of dizziness to apply the remedy with a gentle and reassuring touch.

ESMERELDA
Gashing the head is such a stupid superstition. And it doesn't even work. Look.

She lowers her head and shows Maria a criss-cross of scars on her head.

ESMERELDA (cont)
You can still cast spells.

Maria puts it all together and understands--and is surprised.

MARIA
You are a witch!

Esmerelda's surprised that she's surprised.

ESMERELDA
And you're not, are you? Oh, you poor thing.

She reaches out to console her innocent cellmate, but Maria retreats, making the sign of the cross, fearful of this odd woman, this witch. This offends Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA (cont)
I don't ride a broomstick through the air or kiss the Devil's cock. I midwife, and grow herbs, and heal the sick, as best I can. And for that they want to burn me.

Maria is ashamed of her fear.

MARIA
I'm sorry.

Esmerelda is mollified, and finishes the original gesture: she squeezes Maria's arm reassuringly.

ESMERELDA
My name is Esmerelda. I didn't mean to be short with you. It's just that when your hide is furrowed and tanned like mine, they'll take some spiteful farmer's word for it that you've got ten tits and a cunt full o' teeth.

She barks and takes a mock bite out of the air, then smiles.

CUT TO

INT. MEN'S CELL--DAY

The face of the Englishman, the shock of dying upon it--eyes rolled back and shot open, tongue hanging out of the mouth, a choking rattle in the throat. He dies.

Pico closely, cautiously looks him over. He starts to laugh, louder and louder.

ANTONIO
What is it?

PICO
(laughing) He's dead.

Antonio is confused. Abdul looks warily over his knees from the shadows.

ANTONIO
Why are you laughing?

PICO
Because this man (he slaps the body almost fondly), this fine man will make them wet their pantaloons.

The dwarf jester runs to the door and beats on it.

PICO
The Englishman is dead! The Englishman is dead!

Antonio still does not understand.

The Guard opens the door and Gomez enters.

GOMEZ
Quiet!

PICO
(quietly) The Englishman is dead.

Gomez goes to the body, checks it.

GOMEZ
Liar! He's not dead.

PICO
Yes, he is.

Pico slaps the corpse's cheek, making a hollow tone, delighting in the fact of its lifelessness.

Gomez pulls out a sap and beats him away.

GOMEZ
No, he's not!

PICO
You can't make him confess now.

Gomez turns his wrath on the lifeless form, kicking it crazily, scaring Abdul who ululates in panic and runs around the cell.

GOMEZ
He's not dead! He can't be!

Dr. Huesos appears in the doorway.

DR. HUESOS
I told you he wouldn't survive another strappado.

GOMEZ
No, you didn't!

DR. HUESOS
Yes, I did. Francesco wrote it down.

He kneels over the body, holding a small mirror to its lips. No mist, no breath.

DR. HUESOS (cont)
I'm not taking the blame for this one.

GOMEZ
It was Mendoza. Mendoza ordered me to do it.

The dwarf laughs. Antonio begins to understand, though it seems insane.

Mendoza fills the doorway. His presence commands silence. He limps to the corpse, checks its eyes. He nods to Gomez to leave, which he does.

Mendoza kneels over the body and prays. Antonio notices that in profile you can see <u>through</u> his clasped hands, that both palms have holes clear through their centers.

Gomez returns with a cart that he leaves in the hall at the door. Mendoza crosses himself and rises; Gomez picks up the body and carries it out.

Mendoza nods at Abdul.

MENDOZA
Bring the moor.

The Guard grabs the cringing prisoner, and the doctor checks him, looking under the rag over his eye. Abdul shakes as if about to come apart.

DR. HUESOS
Give him more time, or you'll have another corpse on your hands.

Mendoza does not like being denied or chided. But there are alternatives.

MENDOZA
Then take the dwarf.

The smile dies on Pico's face and he goes pale as the Guard grabs him.

MENDOZA (cont)
And the new one.

He nods at Antonio, and leaves. The burly Guard grabs the baker, too.

In the moment before they are dragged out, Antonio and Pico look at each other. Pico's eyes are full of fear, but then his smile comes back, with a small laugh. Antonio can only shake his head.

By the time they are hauled into the hall, Pico is laughing his full-blown laugh.

EXT. DUNGEON HALL--DAY

Gomez throws the body on the cart and pushes it down the hall--

--in the opposite direction from the one in which the prisoners, led by Mendoza, escorted by the Guard and followed by the doctor, go. Pico's laugh echoes above the groans of the dungeon.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

A fire burns brightly in a huge hearth, big enough to walk into. A large iron pot sits in the fire, oil bubbling inside it.

The torture chamber is large, window-less, always warm and fire-lit.

The equipment and trappings of torture abound: ropes, chains, racks, pulleys, a metal chair with straps on the arms and legs, gargoyles on the wall. At a large table, his ever-present book open in front of him, sits Francesco, as the two prisoners are ushered in. There is also a lute on the table. Antonio takes it all in, without fully comprehending its doom. But Pico knows; he takes a deep breath, drawing up courage.

FRANCESCO
Master Pico, formerly the Queen's jester, you are accused of heresy.

Mendoza holds up his hand to stop the proceedings. The reddish tint of the fire shines through the hole in his hand.

MENDOZA
I have heard that the Queen's best musician is the Queen's jester.

PICO
Formerly the Queen's jester.

Mendoza takes the lute from the table, holds it out to the dwarf.

MENDOZA
Play.

PICO
Why should I?

Mendoza opens a large chest near the table and withdraws various torture devices, tongs and evil-looking instruments, to examine in full view of those upon whom they are about to be used. He takes a set of thumbscrews out and shows them to Pico.

MENDOZA
As long as you play, you won't be questioned.

Pico takes up the lute.

PICO
What would you like to hear?

MENDOZA
Something you played for the Queen.

Pico smiles and plays--beautifully, a lyrical high-Renaissance melody, tender and touching.

MUSIC OVER:

EXT. CASTLE, REAR--DAY

A gate in the rear of the fortress swings down, across a shallow moat. Gomez exits, wheeling the cart onto the gate-bridge. We can hear the lute MUSIC echoing from deep in the dungeon.

Just up the road on the other side of the moat is a mass grave, a ditch for bodies. He tips the cart, dumping the body of the Englishman, sending scavenging crows to flight.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Pico plays as if torture and death did not exist. He is totally lost in the music, in the ecstasy of creation.

Mendoza's face is as stolid as ever as he listens to the plaintive tune.

Dr. Huesos checks his teeth with his mirror.

MUSIC OVER:

INT. WOMEN'S CELL--DAY

The two women prisoners can hear the MUSIC faintly.

MARIA
What's that?

Esmerelda is quizzical; this is unexpected.

ESMERELDA
Must be some new kind of torture.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Gomez enters, showing little appreciation for the song in the air.

Pico is transported by the music he plays, giving himself fully to his artistry, to the exclusion of all else.

The playing has captured Antonio, and even the Guard traces the melody in the air with a rough hand.

Then, in the middle of an exquisite crescendo, a lute string breaks, with an awful "TWANG!"

Antonio cringes.

The doctor looks over from his mirror.

Francesco shakes his head.

Pico looks wistfully at the sprung string. He sighs, and shrugs.

Mendoza reaches out and rips the lute from hapless Pico's hands, smashes it on the side of the hearth, and throws the pieces in the fire. He gestures to Gomez, who grabs both of the dwarf's arms.

The torturer puts the thumbscrews on the dwarf's fingers.

MENDOZA
Confess truly or you will never play the lute again.

He nods to Francesco.

FRANCESCO
Master Pico, do you confess that you said the Queen, who rules by divine right, is a witch?

PICO
What I said, exactly, was--"I don't want to say that Her Majesty is a sorceress, but she recently made a hundred-thousand Jews disappear."

FRANCESCO
Does that mean you did or did not say she was a sorceress?

PICO
It's a jest. That's my job. I'm a jester.

MENDOZA
Formerly a jester.

He tightens one of the screws. Pico cries out in pain, but he turns the pain into a shrieking laugh.

FRANCESCO
I see, but does the jest mean that you think the Queen is or is not a witch?

PICO
If I have to explain it, it's not a jest.

Mendoza tightens another screw. Blood spurts from under the nail. Pico laughs a ear-splitting, hysterical laugh.

ANTONIO
Stop it!

CUT TO

INT. WOMEN'S CELL--DAY

Maria hears Antonio yelling "Stop it!" a second time.

MARIA
Antonio!

ESMERELDA
Who's Antonio?

MARIA
My husband. (yelling to him) Antonio!

Esmerelda puts a hand over her mouth.

ESMERELDA
For his sake--

MARIA
But they're torturing him!

ESMERELDA
And won't it be torture for him to hear your voice, to know how much his pain hurts you?

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

The Guard puts the point of his sword in Antonio's ear.

FRANCESCO
If you don't wish to reach the second level of torture--

He nods to Pico, who shivers with the pain, laughing between shivers.

FRANCESCO (cont)
--you may confess now. The Holy Inquisition is merciful to those who truly confess their sin.

Antonio straightens his posture and clamps his jaws rigidly shut.

GOMEZ
Then watch and see what waits for you.

The doctor is inspecting Pico's hands.

DR. HUESOS
The nail is split, but there is no danger.

FRANCESCO
(to Pico) Did you mean to say that the Queen practiced sorcery?

PICO
You have no sense of humor.

Mendoza tightens another screw, hard. Blood spurts on Pico's shirt. The dwarf screams; then his gasping seems both sobbing and laughter.

PICO
But you, Mendoza, have a real genius for comedy.

Mendoza, deadpan, twists yet another screw, sharply. Bones crack.

DR. HUESOS
Wait! You're crushing the bone.

He looks at the dwarf's limp, twisted, bloody hands, checks his eyes and listens to his chest.

DR. HUESOS (cont)
He's small and deformed. I cannot guarantee he will survive much more.

GOMEZ
You're just being cautious because you let the Englishman go too long.

DR. HUESOS
I did not. I warned you. That was not my fault.

Pico giggles at their arguing.

PICO
I'll tell you the best jest of all. Torquemada's grandmother was a Jew.

Mendoza maliciously turns another screw. Cracked bones are crushed. Pico's laugh rises horribly, frighteningly in pitch and intensity.

Even with the sword in his ear, Antonio can't stand it.

ANTONIO
Stop!

PICO
At court they know, but no one speaks of it. Torquemada's a Jew.

Mendoza, refusing to hear his "savior" slandered, twists another screw.

Pico laughs, and faints.

There is a moment's pause, a breathless silence. The vespers bell rings.

DR. HUESOS
Francesco, take note. The torturers were given warning.

Mendoza, business-like, loosens the screws, removes them.

GOMEZ
This is ridiculous. Why even <u>have</u> torturers if you won't let us do our job?

The doctor produces a small jar of smelling salts from his pocket. He waves them under Pico's nose. The dwarf regains sensation--and pain. He moans and shakes.

Francesco closes his book.

FRANCESCO
Questioning is suspended.

As Antonio is led away, he looks back at the doctor working on the dwarf, as the vesper BELL echoes through the dungeon.

CUT TO

EXT. PAPAL GARDEN--DAY

A bright sun pours across a verdant, sweeping lawn in a lush floral garden. The POPE in his robes sits in a thronelike chair, his face intent with listening. A figure robed in red, CARDINAL GIULIANI, reads to him from a parchment.

CARDINAL
The torturer bound me to a ladder, then set fire to my hair. He placed strips of sulphur under my arms and around my back and set fire to them. Then he squeezed my legs in Spanish Boots--

POPE
What kind of boots?

CARDINAL
A Spanish Boot is a powerful vise, your Holiness. Very painful.

The Pope waves him to go on.

CARDINAL (cont--reading)
He tightened the Boots until the pain was so excruciating, I fainted, but he revived me so that I would always be in agony. Then he ate lunch.

The Pope motions curtly, angrily, to him to stop.

The Cardinal stops reading that parchment, and starts to read the next.

CARDINAL (cont--reading)
Please God, your Holiness, make them stop the auto da fe's. They laid my father on the ground with blocks of wood under his joints, then rolled a large wheel over him and crushed every bone in his body. As he screamed for a merciful death, they tied him to the wheel, raised it in on a pole, and left him to starve. Then they burned my mother at the stake, and when I cried to her, they beat me in front of her--

The Pontiff pounds on the arm of his chair. He is furious.

POPE
We ordered him to stop the auto da fe's! That monk ignores Our letters!

He waves, and an attendant brings a tray bearing a parchment. The Pope seals it with wax, and presses the imprint of his ring into the hot red wax.

POPE
Go to Toledo; convey to the Spanish Inqusition Our message that the Church does not rule by terror.

The Cardinal kneels and takes the letter, kissing the ring.

CARDINAL
Yes, Your Holiness.

POPE
Stop the killing, Giuseppe, and bring Torquemada here.

CUT TO

INT. MEN'S CELL--TWILIGHT

The tints of twilight brighten the cell window. A bird lights on the sill, then flies away. Abdul kneels, facing away from the light, to the east, to Mecca. He prays, chanting low, rhythmically, in Arabic.

Antonio sits on the floor, exhausted, ministering to the dwarf, who lies beside him. The jester is conscious, but feverish, sweating, laboring to breathe. His hands are bandaged, but the bandages are stained with dried blood. He trembles, and whimpers intermittently. Antonio takes off his shirt and covers Pico with it. Then he sits back, struck by the enormity of what has happened to him.

ANTONIO
Lord, what am I doing here?

He runs a hand through his hair, and notices that his head still hurts from the blow he took earlier--how many days ago?

Abdul's praying drones in the background.

Pico, shaking, with great effort, speaks.

PICO
Antonio--

ANTONIO
Master Pico.

PICO
Tell me a joke.

ANTONIO
I--I can't think of any.

PICO
Everybody knows some jokes. Tell me a joke. Please. A funny one.

ANTONIO
This is not a time for laughter.

PICO
This is especially the time. When I laugh, the pain is gone, for a while. And it hurts them to hear us laughing. It's the only weapon we have. Now make me laugh, please.

This is perhaps the most difficult task Antonio has ever had to do. But it is important, so he tries hard.

ANTONIO
A man asks his friend how to impress women, and the friend tells him to put a potato in his pants. The next day the man sees his friend and says "It didn't work."

The pain arches Pico, shivering through him.

ANTONIO (cont)
Pico--Pico!

The shivering subsides, and the dwarf looks up at him.

PICO
Get to the laugh.

ANTONIO
So the friend says, "Did you put a potato in your pants?" The man says, "Yes, I did." "And the women weren't impressed?" "No," says the man. "Show me," says the friend. The man puts the potato in his pants and shows his friend. And the friend says--

PICO
"You're supposed to put it in the
front of your pants."

Abdul, in the niddle of his praying, breaks out is a short, involuntary laugh.

And Pico laughs. Antonio understands now, the importance of the humor to Pico's courage. He smiles.

ANTONIO
You heard it. I'm sorry.

PICO
I'm a jester, remember? It's
an old favorite.

The pain wracks him again. Antonio wipes his brow, tries his best to comfort him. Pico clutches Antonio's arm, hanging on for his life.

PICO (cont)
When they try to make you afraid,
laugh in their faces. They hate it.

ANTONIO
I will.

PICO
Now I'll tell you one. What's the
difference--(cringes in pain)--
between a juggler and a torturer?

ANTONIO
I don't know.

But Pico doesn't answer. His breathing is choppy, hard.

ANTONIO (cont)
What is it? What's the difference?

The dwarf smiles at him, laughs a short laugh--

ANTONIO (cont)
Pico? Come on, jester, get to the
punchline.

--and dies. Antonio's lip quivers, his eyes tear.

He looks up and sees Abdul, still kneeling, but looking at them, with an different look in his eye. His head is erect, a sympathetic fury in his face.

Antonio looks back at the broken dwarf in his arms--and starts to laugh, as Pico did when he found the Englishman.

ANTONIO (cont)
He's dead! The dwarf is dead!!

He runs to the door and pounds on it, laughing madly.

ANTONIO (cont)
The Queen's jester is dead!

Gomez opens the door and enters, in a foul mood. He simply growls at Antonio and slams him against the wall, yet still Antonio laughs.

Abdul is a fearful groveler again, hurrying back out of harm's way.

Then Gomez peers down at the dwarf, lifts the torso with one hand and lets it fall, dead weight. He half-sighs-half-growls.

GOMEZ
Shit.

He picks the body up like a sack and carried it under one arm. He carries the dead dwarf out, leaving Antonio, laughing <u>and</u> crying, slumped against the wall.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

The doctor enters, eating a biscuit.

DR. HUESOS
Sorry, I'm late.

Francesco opens the book, quill poised, and nods to Mendoza--

--who stands over Esmerelda, stretched on a ladder to which her limbs are bound, the bottom raised on a chair so her head is lower than her body.

Maria stands, guarded, to watch, like Antonio before her.

ESMERELDA
We don't have to do go through this. I'm perfectly willing to talk about whatever you'd like to discuss.

Gomez ties a knot in a rag that already has several other knots tied in it. He jams the rag into her mouth.

FRANCESCO
Confessions are only accepted under torture.

MENDOZA
Surgeon.

Dr. Huesos checks the placement and depth of the rag. He pokes it a bit further in with his finger.

DR. HUESOS
You may proceed.

Mendoza picks up an earthenware jar from a small group of them. From it he pours water into Esmerelda's mouth. It chokes her, forcing the first knot down her throat, but the rag keeps the water from drowning her.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

The SCREEN is SHADED, NARROWED, as someone watches from a dark place through a slit into the torture chamber. The watcher watches Esmerelda being tortured, then PANS to see Maria, watched by the Guard, standing by uncomfortably observing.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

FRANCESCO
Mistress Esmerelda, are you a witch?

She can only cough and gag.

FRANCESCO (cont)
Mendoza, please.

Mendoza stops pouring, and Gomez yanks the rag out of her mouth. He wrings watery blood from it, while he ogles Maria.

She is too disgusted even to scorn his look.

Esmerelda gasps eagerly, desperately for breath.

ESMERELDA
Yes--I'm a witch.

FRANCESCO
Do you confess to the acts of sorcery of which you have been accused?

ESMERELDA
Yes, yes--I do.

FRANCESCO
Name the specific acts.

Esmerelda tries to think, but she is still short of breath, and wits. She panics.

ESMERELDA
I--I can't remember.

Gomez replaces the rag, as Mendoza lifts another jar and pours.

MARIA
Why are you doing this? She confessed.

FRANCESCO
She must confess truly and completely what she knows is her sin, without help.

The doctor puts a hand on Mendoza's shoulder, stopping him.

DR. HUESOS
Slowly, Mendoza. You'll drown her.
(to Esmereldo) Are you all right?

He takes the rag from her mouth.

ESMERELDA
Please, tell me what I did. I can't think--I can't remember.

DR. HUESOS
(to Mendoza) Continue.

He stuffs the rag back and Mendoza pours, carefully, a steady rail of water.

DR. HUESOS
That's it. Just enough to choke her.

MARIA
You're the evil ones. You enjoy this.

Suddenly, Esmerelda's twisted, panicked face goes still. Her body stops fighting its bindings. Her eyes go blank, roll back in her head.

Mendoza notices, and it worries him. He stops pouring.

MENDOZA
Surgeon!

The doctor has noticed, too. He removes the bloody rag.

DR. HUESOS
Not another one.

Mendoza throws the rest of the water from the jar in Esmerelda's face, but there is no reaction.

MARIA
Cowards! You killed her.

Mendoza has had it, with the deaths, with Maria.

MENDOZA
You may watch--

He grabs her.

MENDOZA (cont)
--and learn your fate--

He pulls her from the Guard and throws her across a wooden frame--the rack.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Mendoza binds her to the frame, tautly.

MENDOZA (cont)
--but hold your tongue!

She struggles, but Gomez is quick to join in, holding her down, and copping a feel in the process, his rough hand running up her shift.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

In the wall, to one side of a door, we see a dark slit in the mortar between two dungeon stones--and the dim shine of two eyes behind it.

Francesco protests.

FRANCESCO
Mendoza! She's just here to watch.

Mendoza
She's watched.

The doctor is examining Esmerelda, holding his mirror to her mouth, listening at her chest, checking the mirror.

DR. HUESOS
She's still alive. Good thing that girl stopped you.

Mendoza stands beside the rack, at the lever connected to several gears that pull the bindings. He looks down at her, his usual taciturnity overcome by a venting anger.

MENDOZA
One good turn deserves another.

He pushes on the lever; the gears turn; the bindings pull; her limbs stretch.

She cries out in pain.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Even stretched out on the rack in pain, perhaps especially, Maria is lovely.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

FRANCESCO
You will wait, Master Mendoza, until I have asked the question. (to Maria) Mistress Maria, are you a witch?

MARIA
No.

Mendoza pushes again. The gears turn another notch. Maria screams.

FRANCESCO
You deny the accusation made by the merchant Quintana.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Her breaths are short, labored, her voice weak.

MARIA
Yes--I don't know--why he said it--I'm not--

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Mendoza jerks the lever forward. The rack creaks, the wood strained.

Maria, speechless with pain, her face contorted with agony, hears a fuzzy, far-off, familiar voice, ECHOING uncertainly.

ESMERELDA (VO)
Maria...

Her eyes open in surprise, recognition--but she looks up at the surgeon.

DR. HUESOS
(whispering) I can make him stop.

MARIA
Please.

He puts a hand on her breast. He still whispers.

DR. HUESOS
You must promise to be grateful.

This indignity, added to the others and the pain, makes Maria's cry--when she hears the voice again.

ESMERELDA (VO)
Maria...

MARIA
What? Where are you?

DR. HUESOS
The pain is driving her mad.

MENDOZA
She talks to the devil. (to Franceso) Ask the question.

ESMERELDA (VO)
Maria...Come with me...

FRANCESCO
Are you a witch?

MARIA
No.

Mendoza leans on the lever again. Gomez chuckles over his shoulder.

She wails at the pain.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

The watcher watches her arch on the rack.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Maria's tortured face, screaming--

ESMERELDA (VO)
Maria...

MARIA'S POV:

We look up at Mendoza at the lever.

ESMERELDA (VO--cont)
Come with me...

We ZOOM past Mendoza toward, into, the flame in a torch hanging on the wall--

DISSOLVE TO:

CUT IN MID-DISSOLVE TO:

Maria's body stops contorting, arching; she drops still on the rack. her eyes roll back and go blank in her head, like Esmerelda's.

GOMEZ
Now she's doing it, too.

CUT BACK TO MID-DISSOLVE:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEADOW--MORNING

--the sun shines in a blue sky. PAN DOWN to and across a green and verdant meadow, a pleasant lea covered with flowers and occasional trees.

ESMERELDA (VO)
Isn't it more pleasant here?

PAN sharply to find Esmerelda close by, smiling, flowers in her hand and hair, looking hale and healthy, even younger.

NORMAL POV

Maria finds herself standing in the meadow next to Esmerelda. She looks at her hands, free, unbound before her.

MARIA
How--

She starts to look down.

ESMERELDA
Don't look down!

She reaches out and takes Maria's hand, and Maria looks up into her face.

MARIA
How did I get here?

ESMERELDA
You have the gift.

MARIA
Where are we?

They start to walk through the tall grass and wildflowers.

ESMERELDA
Away from the pain. You had to leave there--it was killing you.

MARIA
This isn't real.

ESMERELDA
It is as long as we make it real, as long as we <u>think</u> it's real. Together we might be strong enough. There's so much I can teach you.

She takes a blossom from a tree bough and puts it in Maria's hair. But Maria is still disoriented.

MARIA
The earth. I don't feel the earth.

She looks down.

ESMERELDA
Don't look down!

CUT TO

MARIA'S POV:

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

From high up we look down, at a sharp ANGLE, at the torture chamber, a flame-flushed red in contrast to the green and blue of the meadow.

MENDOZA
She will confess.

He pushes the lever hard--and we ZOOM IN on Maria's face.

MARIA'S POV

Maria looks up at Mendoza straining at the lever. She is back in her body; she feels the pain. She screams.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Maria's scream is piteously desperate, her body stretched to its limit. She faints.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

The eyes disappear in the slit. PAN DOWN and ACROSS a few feet to a door, which flies open. In it stands Torquemada, breathing hard, looking fierce.

TORQUEMADA
What is she doing on the rack?!

All heads turn to look at him, but in their surprise and fear at his entrance, no-one speaks.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Release her!

Mendoza releases the lever; the gears spin free; the bindings fall loose. The doctor puts his cheek to her mouth and his hand on her "heart."

FRANCESCO
Mendoza insisted she be asked the question. She was only supposed to receive the first level.

DR. HUESOS
She's just fainted. I tried to warn him, Father, like I warned him about the dwarf.

Torquemada ignores him as he steps to the rack.

TORQUEMADA
The next prisoner who dies, the one responsible will be judged an enemy of the Church and tortured!

He motions Mendoza and Gomez away. He sweeps Maria up in his arms.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I will take her confession myself.

As he turns to leave, he gives Mendoza a command.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Torture the husband.

He strides out the door with Maria in his arms.

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

A dark, narrow passageway, inside the castle wall. Maria, her hands tied, hangs from an iron ring. Her face, pressed against the cold stone, twitches; she groans weakly; her eyes flutter and open, groggily. Torquemada's face appears next to hers, his lips at her ear.

TORQUEMADA
(whispering) Your life--your soul--
is in mortal danger.

MARIA
Where am I?

TORQUEMADA
Confess that you are a witch and I
may be able to save your life.

MARIA
But I'm not a witch. By the blood and
pain of Christ, I'm not.

TORQUEMADA
If you will not see your sin, it must
be shown to you.

He pulls her head back by the hair, pushes aside a panel, and holds her face before a slit in the wall. A line of light shines through it, on her face.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Gomez slops fat from a bucket on the seat of a metal chair covered with short, dull spikes. Mendoza takes a flaming piece of wood from the hearthfire and waves it in front of Antonio, who tries not to flinch.

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

Pressing his mouth next to her ear, he speaks softly but harshly.

TORQUEMADA
Call out to him, and he dies.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Now Maria is the watcher. She sees Gomez tie Antonio to the chair and Mendoza thrust the lit stick under it, setting a small pile of wood on fire.

She gasps--but he laughs.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

ZOOM BACK and PAN DOWN from the slit in the wall to see Antonio laughing in the faces of his torturers.

GOMEZ
It should be getting hot now.

ANTONIO
Hot? You couldn't melt snow on this thing.

MENDOZA
Get more wood.

Gomez goes to the hearth for more fuel.

ANTONIO
I'll show you how to build a fire, if you let me up.

MENDOZA
Putting you in with the dwarf was a mistake.

Antonio laughs.

ANTONIO
No, really, it's not working. It's not hot.

Mendoza is aggravated. He unties Antonio and roughly lifts him off the chair. Gomez returns with more sticks and small logs and the bellows.

MENDOZA
(to Gomez) Test it.

Gomez does not look happy with this order. He drops his bundle and sizes up the job. He gets and idea. He leans over and spits on the seat.

The spit sizzles.

Pleased with himself, he turns to Mendoza.

GOMEZ
It will definitely melt snow.

MENDOZA
But will it melt flesh?

With a scarred but strong hand he pushes Gomez backwards, off balance. He falls back--onto the seat of the chair. It's hot! He burns his backside, and leaps/hops/jumps out of the fire.

Antonio gets a big laugh out of this, as Mendoza angrily pushes him back down on the chair and re-binds him to it.

ANTONIO
If you're going to bake my buns,
you'll need more yeast.

MENDOZA
We'll burn the devil out of you,
and you'll thank us for it.

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

Maria can't watch anymore. She pulls back and pleads with the monk.

MARIA
Let him go. I'll confess.

TORQUEMADA
I'll let him go, when we've saved
him from your sorcery.

MARIA
I beg you. I'll do anything.

TORQUEMADA
You'll watch.

He pushes her head back into the mask.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Gomez, rubbing his rear, looks down at Antonio.

GOMEZ
Let us know when you start to melt.

He spits in Antonio's face. Antonio answers with laughter.

ANTONIO
You've got it backwards, apprentice. You put the roast on the spit, you don't spit on the roast.

He laughs, perhaps a little too loud and hard.

Mendoza is at the chest, taking tools of torture from it. He admires an evil-looking short-handled toothed-cup eye-gouger.

MENDOZA
Gomez, attend the moor.

Abdul kneels on the floor next to the large open hearth, his face just off it. He chants a soft but fervent drone of prayer to himself. Two boots step next to his head, the feet of Mendoza.

Gomez grabs him by the hair and lifts him to standing position. The fire burns brightly behind them. Mendoza shows him the gouger up close, waving it slowly, meanly in front of his good eye.

ABDUL
Allah save me--Allah save me--

He covers his eyes with his hands, but Gomez pulls his arm down and pins it behind his back.

GOMEZ
Allah did not save your other eye. Why should He save this one?

Francesco opens the book, inks his quill. The doctor sits beside him idly playing with a cup-attached-to-a-ball-on-a-string, trying to swing the ball into the cup.

FRANCESCO
Moor, you were captured at the glorious battle of Granada wearing the Caliph's royal armor Do you confess that you are the pagan lord, the Caliph Ben Adem?

ABDUL
No, no, no--I am Abdul, a humble slave pressed into service. I was the Caliph's battle double. I wore the royal armor to fool the infidels and save the great Caliph from capture.

Antonio squirms on the hot seat, a ghastly smile on his face.

ANTONIO
I think I'm done on this side.

But no one pays any attention to him.

MENDOZA
Losing an eye did not make you see things differently?

ABDUL
I'm a simple slave.

FRANCESCO
The Caliph Ben Adem would be an honored--and valuable--hostage.

GOMEZ
Blind slaves are good for nothing but beating.

Mendoza moves in with the gouger.

MENDOZA
Hold his pagan head up.

Gomez takes a hand from pinning Abdul's arm and pulls his head back by the hair.

Mendoza places the toothed cup of the gouger, as Abdul cries pitifully.

But behind him, Abdul reaches his hand down and powerfully grabs Gomez by the balls.

Gomez's eyes and jaw pop wide open, a rattle comes out of his throat.

ABDUL
I won't go to Allah a blindman!

MENDOZA
Guard!

He punches Mendoza square in the nose, knocking him backward--

--sprawling into the table, where Francesco quickly closes his book and makes for the door with the doctor.

Abdul grabs Gomez by the hair and lifts him up.

ABDUL (cont)
You enjoy torture so much. Here--

He pushes Gomez's face into the large pot of boiling oil in the open hearth. Gomez's arms flail wildly as the Moor, a vicious look of satisfaction on his face, holds him in.

ABDUL (cont)
--have some.

Suddenly, there is a swordblade at Abdul's throat.

GUARD
Let him go, blackamoor.

The Guard smiles wickedly, having the upper hand, and relaxes just a little--and Abdul grabs the swordblade, cutting his fingers, and jerks the sword from the Guard's grip. He flips it in the air and grabs it by the hilt. He holds it up, triumphantly, and lets Gomez loose.

ABDUL
All--aaaahhh!

Gomez rises from the boiling oil, screaming, his face red, scalded, dripping oil and skin.

A door opens and a dozen Guards enter, drawing their swords.

Abdul throws himself at them, thrusting, slashing, parrying. He is a mighty warrior, and an accomplished swordsman.

He uses Antonio, sitting on the fire, as a shield, moving around him, keeping him between him and two foes.

ABDUL
Will you help me, infidel?

A guard slashes at Abdul, who blocks the blade, just before it would have cut Antonio's throat.

ANTONIO
Yes!

The Moor thrusts right under Antonio's nose and stabs the Guard. He cuts Antonio's bonds, and the baker rolls off the searing chair onto the floor.

ABDUL
Fight for your life, boy.

Antonio is badly burned, but he grabs the fallen Guard's sword, just in time to block a blow from another Guard, and slash into his side.

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

Maria, watching, takes heart from what she sees, her Antonio freed.

MARIA
Run! Run!

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Antonio hears her voice.

MARIA (VO)
Run, Antonio!

He looks for the source of the voice.

ANTONIO
Maria! Where are you?!

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

Torquemada does not understand why she's yelling. He pulls her away from the wall and looks for himself.

CUT TO

WATCHER'S POV--TORTURE CHAMBER

Abdul fights like a demon against a group of Guards. He leaps on the table, avoids a swipe, and kicks a Guard.

PAN to Antonio fighting awkwardly but bravely against a Guard, calling as he fights.

ANTONIO
Maria!

CUT TO

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

MARIA
Antonio!

Torquemada wheels away from the wall, unbinds her hands, and tries to drag her back along the passageway.

TORQUEMADA
Come on!

But she resists, and they struggle on the spot.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Antonio hears her, and that her voice comes from the door nearby.

MARIA
Antonio!

He fights toward it like a man possessed, forcing the Guards back against the door. He thrusts home into the Guard's chest, pushes him out of the way, and opens the door.

INT. STAIRWELL--DAY

A dark stairwell, stone stairs going up stright before him--but no Maria. Then, through the wall beside him, he hears muffled shouting. He quickly examines the wall, running his hand over it, hitting it, until he hits a stone that gives, and to the sound of machinery grinding and stone rumbling, a section of the wall pivots away--

INT. PASSAGEWAY--DAY

--revealing a dark, narrow passageway. He enters and sees Maria and Torquemada struggling. Torquemada slaps her across the face.

ANTONIO
Let her go!

He grabs the monk by his cloak and furiously throws him back through the opening.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--DAY

Torquemada comes tumbling into the chamber. Antonio is upon him in a moment, the point of his blade at the monk's heart.

ANTONIO
Stop, or I'll kill him!

The fighting stops, with Abdul atop the table. Gomez staggers against the wall, his face blistering horribly. Mendoza, still at the base of the table, a hand to his bloody nose, looks in horror at the scene.

MENDOZA
Savior--

Maria is at Antonio's side as they stand over the monk. But though down, he is still commanding.

TORQUEMADA
Kill me! Send my soul to heaven, to exult in eternal glory. And then these guards will cut you, and your wife, into stew meat.

The Guards regroup and close in a few steps on them.

ANTONIO
I suggest you give us a choice, or I will send your soul on its way--to wherever it's going.

TORQUEMADA
If you show mercy to the Church's servant, the Church will show mercy to you.

ANTONIO
Why should I trust you?

TORQUEMADA
This is your test, boy. Few get the opportunity to choose their fate. Trust the Church.

ABDUL
Don't listen to him, infidel.

TORQUEMADA
Death for death, mercy for mercy. This is your test.

He looks at the Guards surrounding him, then in Maria's eyes. He squeezes her hand. He puts up his sword. Torquemada rises, as the Guard takes the sword. Torquemada reassumes his dignity, and stares balefully at the young couple.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You fail. Seize them!

Several Guards grab them, separate them.

ANTONIO
Liar! Hypocrite!

TORQUEMADA
He tried to save their souls, and
they spurned Him in His own land.

MARIA
Blasphemer!

Torquemada's face trembles at this insult.

TORQUEMADA
Take them away.

The Guards do. Then he and the remaining Guards turn to look at Abdul, still standing on the table.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Make an example of him.

Abdul coolly surveys the scene as the Guards circle and move in.

ABDUL
There is no God but God, and
Mohammed is his prophet!

He runs down the table, does a flip in the air over a group of Guards, grabbing the rope used for strappado that runs through a pulley attached to the ceiling. As he slides down it he stabs a Guard, parries another, And pulls himself off the ground on the rope to dodge a thrust and kick another Guard in the head.

Abdul slashes an attacker, takes a ladder leaning against the wall (like the one Esmerelda was tortured on) and throws it into another Guard, knocking him down.

He attacks another, with several high-stepping fencing thrusts, knocking the sword flying from of his hand. The Guard, left defenseless, grabs the nearest weapon, the metal chair they were torturing Antonio in. He lifts it over his head, and suddenly feels his hands burning. He throws the chair down, screaming in pain.

Abdul turns. There are only a few Guards left, and they stand before the exit door (not the one to Torquemada's passageway). They square off, weighing their weapons, their chances, a calm moment before the storm of attack. Abdul breaks first, running at them with a ferocious battle yell--

--so ferocious, they split like the Red Sea and let him pass. One parries his thrust as he runs by, then they all turn to face each other again.

But this time Abdul is between them and the door. When he realizes this--

ABDUL (cont)
Praise Allah.

--he turns and runs out it.

TORQUEMADA
He must not escape!

The Guards follow him.

INT. DUNGEON HALLWAY--DAY

Abdul, ahead of the pack, heads for a door at the end of the hall.

But around <u>that</u> corner comes a squad of Musketeers, Don Carlo, Captain of the Guard, in command. They raise their muskets.

Abdul halts, thwarted.

Don Carlo draws his sword.

Abdul knows it's no use to run. He looks bravely into the barrels of the heavy muskets, wavering in the air before him.

DON CARLO
Ready!

The Guards who were following the Moor turn and hurry back around the corner.

DON CARLO (cont)
Aim!

Abdul speaks softly to himself.

ABDUL
Allah take your servant, Ben Adem.

DON CARLO
Fire!

With pins and hammers CLICKING, a roar of gunpowder EXPLOSIONS, and plumes of sparking smoke, the muskets FIRE.

Abdul is still standing. Benind him on the far wall at the end of the hall, spots smoke from musketball impacts as the Guards look to see what happened.

There is only a blackened, smoking tear in his prisoner's shift. He laughs.

The Musketeers look surprised. Don Carlo is incensed.

DON CARLO
Reload!

They start to reload, pouring powder from goatskins into the barrels of the muskets.

Abdul lifts his sword again, a warrior's glint in his eye. His voice rumbles in a rising battle cry as he charges the line of Musketeers.

They are dropping balls down their musket barrels, and on the floor. They see Abdul coming, and several, frightened, break ranks and run.

The others duck or use their guns as clubs as he wades into them. Don Carlo stays discreetly on the edge of the action.

Torquemada, with several more Guards, appears at the far end of the hall.

Abdul sees the door just past the next couple of Musketeers. He stabs one and parries the other's gun barrel just as it is raised in his face, and just before it goes off. He slashes that soldier, and is left facing Don Carlo, who stands in front of the door.

TORQUEMADA
Don't let him through that door!

Abdul, the whiff of freedom making him mad, glares at Don Carlo with insane malice.

The Captain of the Guard drops his sword and runs.

Abdul runs to the door, opens it. He looks back, to see the Guards bearing down on him. He parries, stabs, and closes the door.

The hall is suddenly silent, except for the groaning of the wounded.

Torquemada strides down the hall toward the door. Don Carlo reappears.

DON CARLO
The Guards will be punished. He will not escape.

Torquemada pays no attention, walking past him.

TORQUEMADA
Don't bother, Captain. The only escape from the Inquisition--

He locks the door, a superior satisfaction in his face, his tone.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
--is death.

FRANCESCO (VO)
Grand Inquisitor!

Francesco runs down the dungeon hall toward him.

FRANCESCO (cont)
An emissary has arrived from Rome. He bears the Pope's seal.

The monk smiles slyly, as he thinks of a joke and a plan all at once.

TORQUEMADA
The mountain has come to Mohammed. We must show him our hospitality.

CUT TO

INT. GALLERY--DAY

The room is more like the inside of a gigantic machine: gears connected to shafts and levers, pulley systems and counterweights almost fill the space. There is a railing along one side, though, that opens onto a large dark space. Torquemada is proudly showing the Cardinal his handiwork.

TORQUEMADA
This is the ne plus ultra of torture, the furthest man has gone in the quest to save souls.

CARDINAL
What does it do?

Torquemada leads him to the railing, gesturing down into the darkness.

TORQUEMADA
See for yourself.

He pulls a large lever in the floor beside him. The gears GROAN and start to turn; the shafts move; the pulleys turn; the weights rise and fall. The RATTLE and CLATTER is dinning, and under it is a long metallic RUMBLING, building to a resounding "BANG!" The Cardinal looks on in awe, and Torquemada can barely hide a smile as he pulls a cord overhead.

CARDINAL
My God!

Now there is a ROARING, too, and orange light rises out of the darkness. Drops of sweat appear on the Cardinal's face. A terrible SCREAM cuts through the ROAR.

CARDINAL (cont)
There's a man down there!

TORQUEMADA
A pagan blackamoor. His soul is lost, but this is just a demonstration.

The Cardinal takes a kerchief from his sleeve and wipes his face. There is more RUMBLING, ROARING, another "BANG!", another SCREAM, more terrible. The Cardinal covers his mouth with the kerchief and turns away from the railing.

CARDINAL
How can you conceive of causing such agony?

TORQUEMADA
Some souls are turned so far from God, pain is the only way to call them back--

He pulls another lever--new gears turns--a GRINDING, a CRASH, a terrifying SCREAM receding below. The Cardinal pulls a gold flask from his sleeve and takes a sharp pull from it.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
--the only tongue they understand.

CUT TO

INT. WINE CELLAR--DAY

A torchlit dungeon room full of oaken barrels, large and small. Torquemada draws a flagon of rich golden-brown liquid from a spigot in a small cask and hands it to the Cardinal.

TORQUEMADA
Amontillado.

The Cardinal, still pale from what he has seen, takes it eagerly.

CARDINAL
Join me, Father.

TORQUEMADA
I don't drink.

CARDINAL
Well, I'm Italian. God's grace upon us.

He drains the flagon, and seems heartened by it.

TORQUEMADA
Another, Your Eminence?

The Cardinal readily gives him the vessel, and Torquemada refills it.

CARDINAL
We do not taste its like in Rome.

TORQUEMADA
They say it has the kick of a Basque mule.

CARDINAL
Or a Carthusian nun.

He laughs heartily at his own joke and takes the drink. Torquemada smiles disingenuously.

CARDINAL (cont)
To our common goal, Father--the glorification of the Church.

He drinks the vessel dry in a quaff, then points to the cask.

CARDINAL (cont)
If the Inquisition doesn't mind.

Torquemada gestures for him to help himself.

TORQUEMADA
It belongs to the Church, one of the many treasures confiscated in the course of our holy work.

The Cardinal fills his flagon for himself, then turns, a bit unsteadily, and straightens himself to present a stern front.

CARDINAL
Impressive. Yet His Holiness is not pleased with the cost--in lives. He wants the auto-da-fe's discontinued immediately.

Torquemada turns away, troubled, pacing past a large hole in the stone wall of the cellar.

TORQUEMADA
Surely Rome understands that public executions discourage sin.

CARDINAL
God commands that we love our neighbor--not roast him.

He drinks.

TORQUEMADA
But Your Eminence, what greater love than to manifest God's justice?

The Cardinal takes the flagon from his lips, produces the sealed parchment from his robe, and hands it to Torquemada.

CARDINAL
The Pope also orders that the Inqusition stop the use of torture and declare an amnesty for heretics and witches.

Frowning displeasure, Torquemada snatches the parchment, breaks the seal and reads.

TORQUEMADA
Rome is behind the times. His Holiness is old and has lost his zeal.

The Cardinal will not bear this affront to the Pope. He stiffens into a posture of command, but he can hardly command his balance. He sways drunkenly.

CARDINAL
He is the Pope, and He demands that you accompany me to Rome for an audience.

TORQUEMADA
I received no such "demand."

CARDINAL
I just delivered it!

Torquemada lights one end of the parchment with the flame from a torch.

TORQUEMADA
Your Eminence never arrived. Mendoza! Gomez!

They enter, and must have been waiting nearby.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You had an accident on the road.

He gestures to the torturers with the flaming parchment.

They grab the reeling Cardinal, who drops the flagon as he is pulled and pushed into the hole in the wall. They chain him to the spot.

CARDINAL
I carry the Pope's seal! I come directly from Rome!

TORQUEMADA
It's a shame I can't show you my latest invention, the ultima thule of torture, beyond all previous boundaries of fear. But I respect your red robe.

Mendoza and Gomez lift the huge square stones and replace them in the wall. Torquemada joins them, watching the letter burn down.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You see, no matter how terrible the torture, people get used to it. In time, it loses its terror. So I must invent new, more terrible tortures to strike fear into the hearts of sinners to save their souls.

He tosses the last bit of the still-burning letter into the hole.

CARDINAL
You can't! For the love of God!

CARDINAL'S POV: Only one stone remains to be replaced. Torquemada smiles at the Cardinal.

TORQUEMADA
Yes, for the love of God.

They lift and push the last large stone into the last opening. Darkness.

CUT TO

INT. TORQUEMADA'S ROOM--LATE DAY

Before the Virgin's statue, Maria kneels praying. The vespers bell tolls.

Torquemada enters, but she does not look up. He looks at her, then at the altar.

The dust of Duke Alfonso runs through the hourglass, the top almost emptied, but not quite. The BELL tolls in the echoing air. He grabs the hourglass and turns it over, bringing it down with a "WHACK" on the table.

Maria flinches.

TORQUEMADA
This thing is slow.

She continues her prayer as he moves to stand over her.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I forgive you for calling me "blasphemer." It was Satan speaking. But I will not forget it until it is drowned by the cries of your husband burning at the stake.

She prays intensely, pressing her hands together, her eyes closed tight.

TORQUEMADA
You are condemning him to torture, to death, to hell.

Still on her knees, she turns her face to him, tears in her eyes.

MARIA
Father, I truly and completely confess to all the sins I'm accused of. I am a witch. I cast spells. I bewitched my husband.

As he looks into her tear-brimmed eyes, he weakens.

TORQUEMADA
You bewitched me.

MARIA
Whatever you say I did, I confess it. I alone am responsible.

This is not good enough for him. He grabs her arms, shakes her, his wild eyes piercing hers.

TORQUEMADA
You want me to save your husband from the just punishment of the Inquisition. And when I look in your eyes, I want to obey you. You've cast a spell on me.

To save her Antonio, and end the madness, she agrees. She sobs, stripped of the truth, forced to lie.

MARIA
Yes--yes, please let him go!

This seems to satisfy him. He lets her go, gently, and backs away a step.

TORQUEMADA
You have confessed to me. Now I will confess to you.

He moves the skull from its spot in the altar, presses a panel behind it, and pulls back the altar and the table. Behind it is a hidden door. He takes a key from inside his robe and opens it. He offers her his hand.

Hesitantly, trepidatiously, she takes his hand and rises. He ushers her through the door.

INT. SECRET CHAMBER--LATE DAY

She enters a revelation, a wonder. The space is large and filled with beautiful objects: ornate tables and padded chairs, a fourposter featherbed, plush tapestries on the walls, a full-length gilt-trimmed mirror. Statues and paintings of the Virgin Mary decorate the room. On the mantle of a marble hearth, and on a large paper-strewn table, inlaid and polished pendulum clocks TICK. She is speechless.

Torquemada closes, and locks the door.

MARIA
It's beautiful.

TORQUEMADA
No one knows about it. I come here to think.

He points to the table, at the papers, pen and quill, compass and shears.

MARIA
Why do you keep it a secret?

TORQUEMADA
Others don't understand the burden of doing God's work.

He walks to the hearth and stands amid the TICKING clocks, their complex gearworks showing through glass doors and open frames.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
There has never been a timepiece like this, with this precision.

He traces the pendulum movement with his finger in the air.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Death is certain; only the time is uncertain.

He grasps her arm and takes her to the bed. He points over it, above.

From the ceiling, by a slim thread, hangs a polished sword.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I go to sleep knowing that the thread could break at any moment, like the thread of life. If God thinks I've done wrong, he can strike me down anytime.

MARIA
He already can. He lets us live, he gives us life, because He loves us, and He wants us to love each other. Don't be afraid to open your heart.

The monk is getting overheated, with a storm of contradictory passions raging in him: desire, love, fear, hate, guilt, pride. He drops to the floor, kneeling at her feet, as if praying.

TORQUEMADA
Maria, I--I love you.

Reflexively she crosses herself. He catches her hand, and puts it to his lips.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. SECRET CHAMBER--NIGHT

We see in the gilt-edged mirror Torquemada carefully, respectfully placing a white lace mantilla over Maria's head. She wears a blue dress and remarkably resembles the portraits of the Virgin around the room. She looks uncomfortable, though, as if she didn't trust him.

MARIA
You promise you'll free Antonio.

TORQUEMADA
I swear it by my love for the Blessed Virgin.

He gazes in the mirror at Maria and sees her as the madonna. He places around her neck a long, jeweled rosary. We have seen it before. It was the Countess d'Alba Molina's.

He leads her to the bed.

TORQUEMADA
Come, lie under the sword.

She stops at the bedside. He insists, cold fire in his eyes.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Lie down, or he dies.

She does, reluctantly, and looks up at the point of the sword dangling several yards above her. It wiggles and wavers slightly, gently, in the room's air currents.

And Torquemada looks down at her. Now that she is accessible, it is almost too much to bear. He reaches out to touch her leg, but as his fingertips approach her, he collapses, weeping, burying his face in the bedding by her knees.

She looks down at him weeping (--MARIA'S POV), then up at the sword dangling. (NORMAL POV) With an effort of will, and hope, she reaches down and strokes his head, comforting him in his distress.

At her touch, he looks up, his tear-blotched face transfigured by joy. Now that she has touched him, he can touch her--he reaches out and caresses her knee.

She can't help herself. She lies back rigid, withdraws her hand and whispers a prayer for strength.

But Torquemada is transported by the touch of leg. He slowly pulls the blue dress up her calves, over her knees, up her thighs. He trembles at what he sees. His hands grip the hem of the dress, as if praying, then with a mad pull, they tear the dress apart.

He stands, holding the two torn pieces apart, revealing her long, beautiful legs. With a cry he tears again, and the material splits to the neck, revealing her smooth stomach and lovely breasts.

She prays, her eyes closed.

He drops the ends of cloth, reaches up to her elbows, past her breast and clasped hands, to her neck, and sharply rips the neckline of the dress. It falls away, leaving her naked, except for the rosary.

He stands, tears still drying on his face, and basks in her beauty. He slowly lifts his monk's robe. He lifts his leg to mount her.

Her eyes dart open--MARIA'S POV: she sees the swordpoint, then it is covered by his face, twisted with passion he cannot control.

His breathing is short and sharp; his hands run all over her body. She clutches the bedding in a desperate grip. He squirms on top of her, the robe loosening, but still on.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Oh, God--oh, God--oh, God--

He squirms faster, harder. He reaches down inside his open robe, and suddenly his face is pained. He strains, pressing his body to hers, but his face takes on an anguish that betrays little pleasure.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
--oh, God, please--please, God.

At last, he cries out and rolls off her, onto his back, covering his face.

There is a moment of silence, stillness. Then he spits out bitter words.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Where is this "love" you talk about?

He rises over her, looks down at her, hatred in his face.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Why don't you open your heart?
Hypocrite!

He slaps her.

MARIA
I didn't resist. I gave you what you wanted.

TORQUEMADA
That makes you a whore.

He slaps her again. But now she fears for more than her own safety.

MARIA
It's not my fault if you can't love. I kept my vow.

TORQUEMADA
You sell your body for an oath.
Whore!

He raises his hand to slap her again, but she blocks it and in a fury of her own rolls him over, so that she is on top.

MARIA
You swore, to God, you'd let my husband go!

She slaps him. The monk is surprised to be in the submissive position. It gives him an idea, and maybe a little pleasure.

TORQUEMADA
You cast a spell on my manhood.

MARIA
You promised!

TORQUEMADA
No one knows, but you.

He grabs the rosary and chokes her.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You'll use this to discredit the
Inquisition and pervert God's will.

She struggles to breathe, but he is a maniac.

MARIA'S POV: ZOOM back from his face to look down on her being strangled.

Her eyes go blank, roll back. Still he chokes her, a madman in a panic.

MARIA'S POV: She watches the contorted face of the monk as he strangles her body. Then she looks--we PAN--up to the sword, up to the thread.

ZOOM IN on the thread to see it slowly start to unravel.

MARIA (VO)
Lord, forgive me.

He is wild with killing her. He rolls over, back on top, to finish the job--

--just as the sword falls where they had just lain. It sticks in the mattress, the blade half-buried.

This stops Torquemada. He stares at it, wide-eyed, and crosses himself.

TORQUEMADA
God has spoken.

He looks back at Maria, whose eyes blink with the return of her senses. She chokes and gasps for breath, exhausted.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
He doesn't want me to kill you.

He pauses, puzzled, trying to think of what to do.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
But I can't let you go.

He looks around, to the table, sees the shears.

He grabs her and drags her off the bed. She is just recovering enough to act; she reaches for the sword, but he pulls her just out of reach, off the bed as she does.

She struggles against him the best she can, but he has a mission. With cold brutality, he pounds her head against one of the tapestries, and the wall behind it. She is dazed.

He pulls her to the table. From the papers of torture designs, he lifts the shears. He leans her head back on a chair, reaches into her mouth and grabs her tongue. He makes the sign of the cross with the shears, then opens them and lowers them toward her mouth.

He places the opened blades around her tongue. They start to close.

Maria's eyes suddenly spark with knowledge, sensation, fear, no longer dazed.

MARIA'S POV: ZOOM QUICKLY past Torquemada's horrible face, to an upper corner of the room, PANNING AROUND and look down on the top of her own face over Torquemada's shoulder.

He prays as he cuts out her tongue.

TORQUEMADA
Lord, forgive me for what I must do.

Blood sprays on the papers spread on the table.

CUT TO

INT. WOMEN'S CELL--DAY

The door opens. A Guard enters holding up a stumbling Maria, wearing her prisoner's shift again. His meanness is tempered by horror, even pity.

Maria is still in shock, her mouth smeared with blood.

Esmerelda, in pain from her own torture, takes one look and realizes that Maria has been horribly brutalized. She rises from the floor to help.

ESMERELDA
Oh, no.

The Guard leaves, locking the door.

Esmerelda, like a mother, takes the shaking Maria her in her arms. The older woman is shaking herself, almost afraid to ask what happened.

Maria's lips quiver, she opens her mouth to say something, but Esmerelda, seeing the bloody mass where her tongue was, reflexively puts her hand on Maria's mouth, to stop her and to avoid seeing the full horror.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Oh, my God, Maria.

Maria tries to talk. Esmerelda takes her in her arms, cradling her, stroking her hair, desperate to help her.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Don't. You don't have to. Don't try.

She takes Maria's head in her hands and looks in her eyes.

ESMERELDA (VO)
Listen to me. You don't need a tongue to have a voice. You can speak with your mind, and heart.

Maria cries, wracked by waves of shock and pain.

ESMERELDA (aloud--cont)
I'm going to send you to the meadow, where we met before. You can heal there, and rest.

Maria shakes her head and tries to say "Antonio."

ESMERELDA (cont)
Antonio will still love you. But you have to stay alive. You'll die if you stay here.

She looks deeply into Maria's eyes, willing her to keep faith.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Your body is weak, but you are strong. You're going to a place where you can heal, and learn to use your gift. When you return, you will be well, and wise, and ready.

She is hypnotizing Maria, who has stopped shaking and given her whole attention to Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA (VO-cont)
Now go...go...go...go...

Maria's eyes roll back in her head; she goes limp in Esmerelda's arms. The old woman embraces her.

ESMERELDA (aloud--cont)
...go.

She lays her gently on the floor. She checks her eyes, puts her cheek to her mouth to feel for breath.

ESMERELDA (cont)
You will rest so deeply, so far
away, that life will seem lost.
When you return, you'll be among
the dead, but you'll be alive.

She kisses her cheek.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Fare well.

She rises, with difficulty and pain, and goes to the door.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Guard! Filthy bastard Guard!

The Guard appears at the slot.

GUARD
Shut up, witch.

ESMERELDA
They've killed another one.

She points to Maria, lying on the floor. The Guard disappears. Her cry follows him down the hall.

ESMERELDA (cont)
The righteous men of Toledo
have murdered another woman!

TIME CUT TO:

INT. WOMEN'S CELL--DAY

Dr. Huesos holds his mirror over Maria's mouth. He checks it.

DR. HUESOS
Damn.

He rises, crosses himself, then turns irately on Gomez, who stands beside him, his face a mass of blisters and scarred skin, some cracked and oozing, most covered with smears of shiny grease.

DR. HUESOS (cont)
You idiots. Why did you tear out her tongue?

GOMEZ
We didn't! We don't do tongues.

FRANCESCO (OS)
Of course not.

Francesco enters the cell. Guards mill around the door.

FRANCESCO (cont)
How would anyone confess if we cut out their tongues? He must have done it.

The doctor's face breaks into a smile.

DR. HUESOS
That's great.

FRANCESCO
What do you mean?

DR. HUESOS
She's dead, and we didn't do it. (mocking Torquemada) "The next prisoner who dies, the one responsible will be an enemy of the Church and tortured."

GOMEZ
Yeah. He kills 'em, too.

FRANCESCO
And who's going to tell him?

The doctor and the torturer stop laughing. This is a sticky problem they want no part of. Behind them, Esmerelda pushes things along.

ESMERELDA
Get this body out of here! It's bringing the rats. It's starting to smell. Get it out of the castle!

FRANCESCO
Remove the corpse, Gomez. I'll tell him.

Gomez and Dr. Huesos--and Esmerelda--breathe sighs of relief.

Gomez lifts the body.

CUT TO

INT. TORQUEMADA'S ROOM--DAY

Torquemada prays zealously to the Virgin in his altar. Dust runs through the hourglass. There's a knock at the door.

TORQUEMADA
Enter.

He continues praying. Francesco comes in. He makes a determined face.

FRANCESCO
Father, a prisoner has died.

The monk's eyes open, look straight ahead. They show cold fear.

TORQUEMADA
Who?

FRANCESCO
The young witch, the one you questioned privately.

The pain of guilt and self-destroyed desire almost make Torquemada lose control.

TORQUEMADA
Where is she?

FRANCESCO
Gomez is disposing of the body.

Torquemada leaps to his feet, pushes Francesco roughly out of the way, and runs out the door.

TORQUEMADA
No-o-o!

CUT TO

INT. DUNGEON HALLWAY--DAY

Gomez wheels the cart down the dim hall, Maria's body laid haphazardly in it, her head hanging over the side. The prisoners taunt from their cells.

PRISONERS
Kill another one, Gomez? Big, bad Gomez killed a woman. D'you fuck her first? Then she probably killed herself from shame. Let us have her, just for an hour.

CUT TO

INT. MEN'S CELL--DAY

Antonio sits against the wall of his cell, dejected, despondent. Lured by the prisoners' catcalls, he looks out the slot.

CUT TO

INT. DUNGEON HALLWAY--DAY

He sees Maria's head hanging lifeless from the death cart as it passes.

He grabs the bars of the slot, as if he would fall from the blow he's received.

ANTONIO
Maria!

CUT TO

INT. MEN'S CELL--DAY

He beats on the door in mad grief, tears shining in his eyes, repeating her name.

ANTONIO
Maria! Maria!

CUT TO

EXT. CASTLE, REAR--DAY

The drawbridge gate lowers from the rear castle wall, revealing Gomez and the cart. He lays a rag gently over his head so the sun will not dry out his burns, and wheels the cart out onto the wooden planks--

--toward the ditch of bodies not far off. Crows and carrion birds fly above it.

TORQUEMADA (VO)
Stop!

Gomez turns to see Torquemada running out of the Castle, after him.

He puts stops, worried that he's done something wrong. He takes the rag from his head and carefully dabs at his tender face.

Torquemada runs passt him to the cart. He sees Maria lying across it, apparently dead. He nearly cries, reaching out, stroking her face. He swallows, gets command of himself, as Francesco joins them.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Who killed her?

GOMEZ
Uh--well, uh--Francesco said you killed her, but--

TORQUEMADA
Why would I kill her? She was innocent.

FRANCESCO
Innocent?

Torquemada lifts the lifts her head, lays it back in the cart, reverently.

TORQUEMADA
I took her confession. She was no witch.

GOMEZ
We didn't do it.

TORQUEMADA
Then it has to be the hag. She will burn at the stake--tonight!

FRANCESCO
Father, the next auto da fe isn't for three weeks.

TORQUEMADA
The next auto da fe is tonight! Prepare her.

CUT TO

INT. SECRET CHAMBER--LATE DAY

Maria, laid out, dressed in the blue dress and white mantle of the Blessed Virgin, wearing the rosary and crucifix of the Countess, the upright sword stuck in the matress next to her. She lies in Torquemada's secret chamber.

He rises from praying next to the bed, and lies down beside her, the sword between them.

He takes her hand, holds it resting on the bed just below the swordblade.

Tears well in his eyes, but he breathes as if he's excited, sexually excited.

His hand leaves her hand and reaches slowly for her leg. To reach it he must press against the sword. He touches, caresses her leg, as the blade presses against his arm. There is a soft KNOCKING in the background.

TORQUEMADA
Oh, God...forgive me...please, God...

His other hand wipes down his face, over the falling tears, down his neck, down his robe, down his stomach...

TORQUEMADA (cont)
God...yes...yes, God...oh, yes...

Suddenly there is a NOISE in the outer room. Torquemada looks up.

He has forgotten to close the hidden door.

MENDOZA (VO)
Savior?

Through the half-open door enters Mendoza. He is shocked by what he sees.

MENDOZA (cont)
Savior.

Torquemada jumps from the bed, embarassed and fuming.

TORQUEMADA
I told you never to call me that.
What are you doing here?

MENDOZA
I--I want to ask a question.

TORQUEMADA
Francesco asks the questions, Torturer.
You encourage the sinners to answer.

Mendoza will not be put off by his superior's flippant annoyance.

MENDOZA
Has my work been unsatisfactory?

This is not the question the monk expected.

TORQUEMADA
No, not at all.

MENDOZA
Then why did <u>you</u> torture her?

He points to Maria.

TORQUEMADA
You, of all people, should know. I'm the Grand Inquisitor; it's my mission to save souls.

And Mendoza won't be put off by dismissive anger.

MENDOZA
Why did you torture her?

TORQUEMADA
She seemed a difficult case, as you were. But when she confessed, it was clear she was innocent. I'd been bewitched by the hag.

MENDOZA
But why did you torture her after she confessed? Have you created a new level of torture?

Torquemada has had about enough of this, his displeasure overcoming his embarassment.

TORQUEMADA
I tortured her first, of course.

MENDOZA
But how did she confess, without a tongue?

Torquemada has bluffed his way into a corner. He looks around for an answer, and sees the table of papers.

TORQUEMADA
She wrote her confession.

Mendoza lingers, not ready to accept this answer, but unwilling to push the issue.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
May I return to my work, now?

Mendoza nods. He turns to leave. But Torquemada is suddenly remorseful, and stops him.

TORQUEMADA
This room--

Mendoza turns and looks back.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
--is where I--create.

MENDOZA
Of course, Grand Inquisitor.

He bends and leaves through the hidden door.

Torquemada looks after him, troubled, rubbing his sword-scratched arm.

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--LATE DAY

Maria across two straps on a bier in the crypt where the Duke d'Alba Molina was exhumed. A veil covers her face.

The sarcophagus lid is raised over the tomb on ropes.

Torquemada addresses a small but austere group: Don Carlo, the Bishop and Priest (who were Inquisitors at Maria's examination), Dr. Huesos, Francesco, and the familiar dignitaries.

TORQUEMADA
This girl, this baker's wife of Toledo, is a martyr of the Church. The very soul of innocence, she was struck down by the devil himself, by witchcraft!

The genteel among the crowd give off a disingenuous "gasp."

He looks on Maria's body with radiant love. He makes the sign of the cross.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
In nomine patri, et fili, et spiritus sancti.

Unnoticed by the praying assemblage, the veil rises and falls slightly, and again. Maria is breathing.

Mendoza and Gomez, his face bandaged now, lift the straps, lifting the body. They carry it to the tomb and start to lower it, when Torquemada stops them. He lifts the veil from her face, and admires its beauty one last time.

TORQUEMADA
This will be a shrine to you,
Maria.

He replaces the veil, and steps back.

Slowly, gently, Mendoza and Gomez lower her in, then pull out the straps.

Mendoza looks down at the body for a moment, with new feelings--of pity, of guilt, of sharing (they were both tortured by Torquemada himself).

Then Lobo lets out the pulley rope--

--and the lid lowers, length by length. Round robin of the "mourners" self-righteously watching her--letting her--die: Torquemada, Don Carlo, The Bishop, the Priest, the doctor, the scribe, Gomez, Mendoza, the others.

The lid drops heavily atop the tomb. The carved cross is in place. Maria is buried.

CUT TO

INT. MEN'S CELL--NIGHT

Torquemada enters with Guards.

TORQUEMADA
Baker--

Before he can say another word, Antonio charges him, gets his hands around his throat and is pressing him against the cell wall, choking him.

ANTONIO
You killed my wife!

The Guards try to pull him off, but he has single-minded strength.

ANTONIO (cont)
You murdered her! I'll kill you!

With a truncheon blow to the ribs, the Guards finally pull Antonio away. Torquemada struggles for breath. He, too, is full of hatred, but it is masked by a forgiving benevolence.

TORQUEMADA
The Inquisition declares that your wife was not a witch. She was innocent, and so are you. You will be set free.

Antonio, seething with a fierce sorrow, answers through gritted teeth.

ANTONIO
My angel's dead. Can you set me free from that?

TORQUEMADA
We can try. Take him.

The Guards tug him out--

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

--into the hall, and down it. He calls back to the monk

ANTONIO
I'll hear your dying screams!
I'll look down on your dying face!

Torquemada steps into the hall, adjusting his robe, straightening himself.

TORQUEMADA
No, you won't.

The Guards drag him to the door at the end of the hall, the one Abdul "escaped" into. They open it, and push Antonio through. They close it.

Torquemada locks the door. He makes the sign of the cross.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You will be free, as we will all be free--in death.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio is in total darkness. He finds the wall; it is metal. He follows the iron walls, around a square corner, another, but finds no way out.

He beats on the metal with his fist; it RINGS metallically. He yells out.

ANTONIO
You can't torture me! It doesn't matter anymore! I don't care!

Suddenly there is a low ROAR. The walls begin to smoke and grow red. The ROAR is accompanied by a resonant RUMBLE as the walls begin to RATTLE, to move, to close in, first one way, then the other, by various lengths of iron panels that make up the wall. He presses his strength against the moving wall, but his hands are seared by the heat.

The glow of the reddening walls reveals paintings on them, horrific pictures of demons devouring the damned, images out of Bosch and Breughel, fiendish and fevered.

Before long he is boxed in. He looks down and sees that he stands on a panel painted with the face of a monster, its mouth hideously open. (We saw the face on one of the papers Torquemada showed Maria.) This seems the end. He kneels and prays.

ANTONIO
God save my angel, and let me see her again.

The panel splits along a saw-toothed line, and slides open precipitately beneath him. He falls into a black pit.

CUT TO

EXT. PLAZA--NIGHT

A CANNON fires. ANOTHER--and ANOTHER, announcing a special evening auto da fe.

A crowd, many carrying lit candles, gathers around the platform where torch-bearing Guards flank Torquemada, the Bishop, the Priest and Francesco. The banner waves in a soft wind behind them. Guards on foot and horse, bearing pikes, surround the platform. mOunted at their head is Don Carlo.

By the battery of cannon, the wagon sits with its lone prisoner, Esmerelda. The mob crowds around the wagon. They are a bizarre lot, from a Bosch or Breughel painting, their faces grotesque, pitted and wart-covered, their limbs bent and twisted. One wears a funnel for a hat; another advertises rat poison with a sign around his neck and a pole from which hang dead rats; several lean on long, unstable crutches. Among them are Jorge, the butcher, in his bloody apron, and Senor Quintana, smirking in his finery.

Esmerelda notices that behind the cart stands a barrel of gunpowder used in the cannon.

Torquemada waves to the crowd and steps forward. The crowd quiets.

TORQUEMADA
Christians of the holy city of Toledo! Tonight we rid our country of one of its most dangerous and evil women, the Mistress Esmerelda.

The crowd CHEERS. Esmerelda slides to a sitting position while the focus is on the platform. She looks around furtively, seeing if she is being watched. All the Guards watch the speaker.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
She has a long history of sorcery. She has midwifed many of Satan's children into the world, changing them for Christian babies.

The crowd RAGES and BOOS furiously.

Esmerelda kneels in the wagon, pretending to cry. But seeing that she is unobserved, she reaches out of the wagon and grabs a handful of gunpowder. She looks to make sure no one is watching, then she <u>eats</u> the powder. She gags and chokes, but keeps stuffing it in her mouth.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
And this day, with her black arts, she killed an innocent woman, a Christian woman, one of your neighbors--

The crowd is alive with the news.

CROWD
Who? Who? Maria, the baker's wife. I thought she was a witch. Torquemada said she was innocent!

Meanwhile, Esmerelda, feigning sobs when she chokes, is devouring handfuls of gunpowder, as fast as she can manage to get it down.

Jorge raises his fist and screams:

BUTCHER
Burn her!

Esmerelda sees him, wipes her mouth, and speaks low, to herself.

ESMERELDA
I saved your son when he had the fever.

Others pick up the cry until it becomes a chant:

CROWD
Burn her! Burn her! Burn her!

They hold their candles up, waving them to the rhythm of the chant, like a crowd at a rock concert.

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Antonio lies still, then stirs. His eyes open; he regains consciousness. In front of his face is a foot. Lying across it is a hand, fingers spread and stiff as sticks.

Antonio turns his head and sees a face, its black tongue hanging out. He flinches, but it gets worse. Out of the mouth pokes the head of a rat.

Abruptly, he rises on his hands crawls back, and looks around him: he lies on a pile of dead bodies, fleshy and skeletal, that fill the small, dark room in which he finds himself. He covers his mouth and nose with one hand; the stench is awful.

Suddenly, a hand reaches out of the pile and grabs his arm.

ANTONIO
My God!

He is frightened, but he sees that it's a black hand.

ANTONIO
Oh, my God!

He grabs the wrist and pulls, while pushing bones and bodies aside with his free hand.

From under the morass of corpses emerges Abdul.

ABDUL
Infidel! Praise Allah!

ANTONIO
For what? This is the worst hole yet.

Abdul, out from under the dead, struggles uncertainly to his feet, with Antonio.

ABDUL
At least we are alive.

Pain shoots up his leg; it buckles and he falls.

ABDUL (cont)
My leg. It must have broken in the fall.

Antonio, kneeling beside his fallen friend, examines his leg, then looks around. Hundreds of small eyes peer through the dark at them. A rat scurries over the uneven surface of bodies, then another, larger one.

ANTONIO
(with irony) At least we're still alive.

Abdul reaches out, grabs the leg of a skeleton, cracks off the shinbone, then pulls on the femur. The effort costs him pain.

ABDUL
Help me, infidel.

ANTONIO
Do what?

ABDUL
Use this bone to set my leg.

ANTONIO
What's the use? All there is to eat is flesh; all there is to drink is blood. My angel is better off dead.

Abdul is genuinely touched; his consolation is genuine.

ABDUL
I'm sorry. I know how you feel. I've lost several wives.

Antonio shakes his head, despair sapping his strength.

Abdul pulls on the bone.

ABDUL (cont)
We must not give in. Then the monk will have won.

CUT TO

EXT. PLAZA--NIGHT

Esmerelda pulls her hand away from her mouth, smeared with dark powder. She gags, almost vomits, but swallows it back.

The mob CHEERS madly, many of them drinking, drunk, aroused.

Torquemada radiates power, focusses their frenzy. He nods to Francesco, who steps forward, book in hand.

FRANCESCO
Captain of the Guard, the Inquisition commends the witch Esmerelda to the civil authority for just punishment. Be merciful unto her.

The crowd GOES WILD as Esmerelda jams the last fistful of gunpowder into her mouth.

DON CARLO
Amen. Let the confessed rivals of the Church be condemned according to law and chastised according to custom.

Esmerelda stands, just as the Guards drag her out of the cart--

DON CARLO (cont)
All praise to the Inquisition and to the grand Inquisitor, Father Torquemada.

--through the JEERING, menacing crowd--

CROWD
Burn the witch! Burn the witch! Burn the witch!

--past the platform--

FRANCESCO
I'm sorry, Mistress, that you were not able to properly confess. There just wasn't enough time to torture you.

ESMERELDA
Thanks anyway.

--to the stake in the middle of the plaza. There they turn her over to Lobo, the sneering hulk, who ties her, tautly, to the stake atop the wooden pyre.

She looks out at the ugly mob encircling her. She seizes this once in a lifetime chance, this ironically captive audience.

ESMERELDA
You want a witch? I am a witch.

The crowd "OOH"s.

ESMERELDA (cont)
And I curse you! You will give all your wealth and souls to the Inquisition--and then your hand, and your arm--then one eye, then the other--

The mob is ugly in its hatred of her, and ugly in its praise of their hero.

CROWD
Praise the Inquisition! Bless Torquemada!

ESMERELDA
--then your life! I curse you to suffer
the same death as I do!

The mob BOOS and HISSES, crowding closer to harass her. Chief among them are the butcher and Quintana.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Yes, come closer--get a good look
at your death!

Lobo steps into her view, holding up a blazing torch.

ESMERELDA (cont)
Watch closely, or you might miss
the suffering!

The crowd LAUGHS. Lobo fumes.

ESMERELDA (cont)
I curse you, Lobo, to die by the
flame in your hand.

Angry, he throws the torch on the pyre. It starts to smoke, to burn.

Torquemada, smoke rising before him, the Inquisition's banner waving behind, is moved by the moment to oration.

TORQUEMADA
Fear God! Fear his wrath! There is
one faith, one worship, one Church! All
else is sin, and sin will be punished!

Esmerelda coughs, and hurls another curse.

ESMERELDA
Torquemada! You hypocrite! You tyrant!
I curse you! May you die by your own
tortures, at the hands of all the innocent
souls you tortured and killed!

The mob GOES HYSTERICAL, defending its champion. But the monk bellows above them.

TORQUEMADA
Blasphemer!

The word sparks a memory--

FLASH CUT

--and he sees Maria's face when she called him the same.

He screams at the old woman, around whom the flames and smoke rise. Her clothes are burning, her face sooty and sweating, her hair burning.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You killed the saintly baker's wife!

FLASH CUT

He sees her mouth--her tongue in his hands--the shears--

TORQUEMADA (cont)
The virgin--martyred! If I lie,
let God cut out my to--

FLASH CUT

--cutting into her tongue--the spray of blood--

Suddenly, there is blood coming from Torquemada's mouth. He covers it with his hand, his cry drowned in his mouth. Some in the crowd notice.

CROWD
Look! His mouth! Torquemada's
mouth is bleeding! The baker's
wife was a virgin?

He turns, stumbles from the platform. Don Carlo has no idea what's wrong.

DON CARLO
What's wrong, Grand Inquisitor?

Esmerelda is behind a ROARING wall of flames. Blistering, burning, she speaks lower, privately.

ESMERELDA
God, if you listen to the prayers
of witches, let Maria live.

The crowd is insane with hatred and self-satisfaction. Lobo silently exults, with excitement in his eyes.

CROWD
Die, witch! Burn in hell forever!

Esmerelda is afire, ablaze, but she gives out with one last cry.

ESMERELDA
Then look into hell!!!

The flames engulf Esmerelda. She cries out horribly, her flesh SIZZLING.

Lobo's sneer breaks into a laugh. The crowd edges closer to the flames, throwing stones at the burning body. Their CHEERING merges with the witch's SCREAM, building to a crescendo--

--when Esmerelda EXPLODES! The gunpowder she swallowed has ignited and gone off in a huge, fiery blast.

CUT TO

INT. TOMB--NIGHT

Maria, at the moment of the explosion, awakes, abruptly alert.

CUT TO

EXT. SQUARE--NIGHT

Blood splatters the first row of the mob, and Lobo. Chunks and shards of bones tear into the nearest jeerers--Jorge, the butcher, Quintana, and Lobo--like shrapnel.

Torquemada, off the platform, on his way toward the castle gate, recoils in shock, turning to see the fireball rising into the night.

The wounded stagger and fall, especially the large executioner, who has born the brunt of the blast. Red ends of bone stick out of his body and face, blown into him by the explosion. The crowd shrieks, but no longer in mocking hatred. Now <u>they</u> are dying.

Torquemada, his night's entertainment turned into a disaster, sweeps from the scene into the castle--as the CAMERA SWEEPS back from the square to see the crowd in chaos, lit by the still-raging fire, to the sound of screaming and mourning.

CUT TO

INT. TOMB--NIGHT

Maria, confused, afraid, disoriented, explores her small world's boundaries, pushing against the lid of the sarcophagus.

Her breaths are short, fast, breaking into little cries. She is panicking. She wordlessly cries out, and we hear the voice in her mind.

MARIA (VO)
Antonio!

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Antonio and Abdul pull on the femur, rats watchin all around, and as it comes loose, Antonio falling backward with the bone in his hands, he hears it, too, Maria calling his name, echoing in his mind.

ANTONIO
Maria!

ABDUL
You have to think of yourself.

ANTONIO
Didn't you hear her? She's alive!

ABDUL
Don't go mad on me, infidel.

ANTONIO
I've got to get out of here. She needs me.

ABDUL
And I must see Mecca before I die. Set my leg.

ANTONIO
It will hurt.

ABDUL
Do it!

Antonio grits his teeth, and pulls on Abdul's twisted leg, straightening it.

ABDUL
All--aaahh!!

They pant at the exertion for a second, then the Moor bats a rat off a nearby corpse and tears a strip of cloth from the decaying rags of its clothes. He hands the material to Antonio, who uses it to tie the bone to his broken leg.

ANTONIO
We need a plan, a way out.

Abdul hands him another strip.

ABDUL
The walls look too sheer to climb.

As Antonio wraps the cloth around the bone, he realizes what he's doing.

ANTONIO
Climb!

He pulls the cloth tight into a knot, so tight Abdul shrieks.

Antonio's on his feet, peering through the darkness, rummaging through the bodies, sending the rats running.

ANTONIO
Yes! Bones--strong bones--

He starts picking out, tearing out, bones of all kinds.

Abdul looks at him with his one eye as if he were crazy.

ABDUL
You <u>are</u> mad.

Antonio smiles widely at him and makes a cross of the bones in his hands.

ANTONIO (cont)
I'm coming, my angel! I'm coming!

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--NIGHT

Torquemada enters, still shocked by events at the auto da fe, blood running from the corner of his mouth. He throws himself at the foot of the sarcophagus, on his knees, and prays.

TORQUEMADA
Maria, forgive me.

CUT TO

INT. TOMB--NIGHT

Maria presses with all her strength against the lid, but it is too heavy, by a longshot. Her arms fall back; she breathes hard, exhausted. Tears in her eyes, she lashes out with her fist and hits the lid.

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--NIGHT

Her blow makes the slightest, merest noise--

--unnoticed by the ardently praying monk.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I loved you--

Just outside the crypt, on the other side of the portal, Mendoza steps into the light, sees the monk there praying, and listens to his "savior" confess his love for, and murder of, the young woman.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
--and I killed you. Forgive me.

Mendoza crosses himself, looks at the holes in his hands, then closes them in fists. He steps back into the shadows.

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Antonio lashes a short bone across a large, long one. Then he nods to Abdul, standing by.

The Moor, with painful effort, lifts a tall structure of bones lashed together vertically with shorter bones crosswise at intervals--a ladder. He holds it up while Antonio tears a strip from a fine waistcoat and lashes a legbone to the bottom.

ABDUL
Do you think it will hold?

Antonio ties a skull, through the eyeholes, to the legbone as a step. He nods to Abdul.

ANTONIO
One more and we'll find out.

He tears up the sleeve of the gold-braided waistcoat.

Antonio tightens the last knot. He stands, helps Abdul place the ladder firmly in the bed of bones and bodies on which they stand. Abdul lifts his sword.

ABDUL
You go up. I'll brace the ladder.

Antonio is struck by his sacrifice, his humanity, his majesty.

ANTONIO
You are the caliph, aren't you?

ABDUL
I am Allah's servant. Now go.

Antonio climbs the makeshift ladder. It is rickety, but resilient, bending under his weight, but not breaking.

Abdul strains to hold it still. He hears RUSTLING, and looks around. The rats have re-formed their circle of peering eyes.

Antonio climbs carefully, the lashings creaking, but holding.

He can see the complex of gears and weights that move the panels.

One rat ventures an attack on Abdul's ankle. He kicks him away.

The ladder shakes, and Antonio slips from a "rung" of ribcage, and for a moment he dangles.

MARIA (VO)
Antonio--

She is crying.

ANTONIO
Angel! Where are you?

CUT TO

INT. TOMB--NIGHT

Maria's eyes show life, surprise. She has felt her mind touch Antonio's. She concentrates, though gasping for what little air is left.

MARIA (VO)
Love--help me--

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Antonio grits his teeth, fights the pain, and steadies himself on the ladder.

ANTONIO
I'm coming, Maria. Keep faith.

He reaches the top of the ladder, but the doors are closed tight over his head. He tries to pull them apart, but can't.

ANTONIO (cont)
Abdul! The sword!

Abdul has drawn the sword to hack at the rats, more bold now, who race in, nip at his feet and legs, drawing blood that makes them more bold.

ABDUL
Can you possibly manage without it?

ANTONIO
I need it to open the doors.

Abdul sighs, a grim and determined look on his face. With a mighty heave, and grunt, he throws the sword into the air.

It reaches the top of its flight, and Antonio snatches it by the hilt. He wedges it between the saw-toothed edges of the pit doors, and uses it as a lever to open them. He pushes hard, so hard--

--the tip of the sword breaks off in the door--

--and Antonio almost falls off the ladder.

Abdul is hard pressed to hold the bone structure steady and kick off the attacking rats. They swarm around his feet now.

ABDUL
Hurry, infidel!

Antonio regains his footing on the ladder, wedges the blunt-edged blade in again, and leans into it.

The doors CREAK, and open a crack, light filtering into the darkness.

He leans a bit further--

--and the doors come wider apart.

Antonio, grimacing, pushes at his limit--

--and the panels roll, gears GRINDING, until he can get his hands between them and push for all he's worth.

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--NIGHT

Torquemada, praying, hears the trap door opening, the CREAK and RUMBLE echoing down the dungeon halls. His eyes bolt open. He gets up, wipes his bloody mouth and quickly leaves.

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

ANTONIO (cont)
It's open! Come on!

Abdul is to his knees in vermin. He starts up the ladder, kicking off the rats as he rises, his leg hurting terribly, but his spirit unflagging.

ABDUL
Allah, bless this infidel.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio climbs out of the pit, into the iron room.

ANTONIO
Maria, I'm free! Hurry, Abdul!

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Abdul is bigger than Antonio, and heavier. His weight makes the ladder sag and creak more ominously. It bends, bows and sways, but carries him.

He can see the light above as he climbs, when he hears a CRACK.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio pulls the doors open wider. He rushes to where the ladder is and kneels, peering down into the darkness. He hears another crack. He lies flat, stretches his arm down over the side.

ANTONIO
Grab my hand!

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Abdul reaches out, can almost reach Antonio's hand--

--when the ladder CRACKS through.

It starts to slide under Abdul. He climbs the last few steps furiously and leaps up, just reaching Antonio's hand.

The broken ladder of bones drops away beneath him.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio strains to hold on to Abdul. He hears the ECHOING voice in his mind, each word precede by a gulp of breath.

MARIA (VO)
Help--me--

CUT TO

INT. TOMB--NIGHT

Maria is trying to stay calm, but the terror of being buried alive is awful, paralyzing, and her air is nearly used up. She gasps, prays, tears streaming over her trembling face.

MARIA (VO)
Dear--God--Antonio--

Consciousness--perhaps life--leaves her.

CUT TO

INT. PIT--NIGHT

Abdul strains to hold on.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio makes some headway, pulls back a little. Abdul's other hand reaches up and grabs the rim of the pit. Antonio tugs. Abdul's head appears. They smile, then grimace as they continue the struggle--when LAUGHTER fills the room, ECHOING, disembodied laughter.

They both look around, but see no one. Then, ominously, they hear GEARS GROANING, turning. The pit doors start to close.

The two men strain desperately, Antonio pulling, Abdul scrambling up the side. The doors gain momentum.

Abdul's chest is over the side--he pushes with his arm--

--the rolling doors pick up speed--

--Antonio strains--Abdul's torso is out--he swings a leg up, his foot on the side--but it slides off--he and Antonio share a desperate look--

--as the saw-toothed panels close on Abdul's hips, crushing him.

ABDUL
Praise Allah!!!

His torso shakes with the last of its life. The hollow LAUGHTER fills the room. Abdul's eyes go blank; blood runs from his mouth. Antonio, horrified, lets go of the trembling hand.

Abdul's torso collapses, dead. The LAUGHTER is maddening.

Antonio fights back nausea, grabs the sword, as the door opens and a Guard enters silhouetted in a shaft of torchlight.

Antonio takes out his mad anger on the Guard, running him through with the blunted blade, a tough task.

He withdraws the sword, runs through the door into the light, away from the LAUGHTER--

INT. DUNGEON HALLWAY--NIGHT

--into the dungeon hallway, where a musketeer, just outside the door, knocks him senseless with the butt of his musket. Don Carlo stands over him, picks up the pointless sword, and breaks the blade over his knee.

CUT TO

EXT. MEADOW--DAY

The sun shines white in a perfect blue sky. Leaved and blossomed boughs wave overhead in a pleasant breeze.

Antonio is in the meadow. Tall wildflowers bend to the breeze. He looks around him in breathless wonder.

MARIA (VO)
Love...

He looks around, but she is not behind him, where the sound seemed to come from.

He looks back--and there she is. Lovely, in a white gown billowing in the breeze.

ANTONIO
Angel!

She smiles radiantly.

ANTONIO (cont)
Are you alive?

She touches him on the cheek--and he can feel it. He grabs her hand, kisses it passionately.

ANTONIO (cont)
Is it really you?

He touches her face--and he can feel its soft, perfect skin. Tears flow; he starts to sob.

ANTONIO (cont)
Oh, Maria--Maria--

He lowers his head, crying. The smile leaves her face. She quickly takes his chin and lifts his eyes to look into hers.

MARIA
Don't look down. Stay with me, Antonio.

They embrace, warmly, passionately. They kiss; their love was never more alive. Still embracing, they lower themselves to the ground, Maria turning herself so she is on top of him as they lie in each other's arms, caressing and pressing their bodies together, as if to meld into one forever.

Antonio becomes excited, ecstatic. He twines her hair in his hands--and rolls over on top of her. He holds her in a grip so tight he would never lose her, his head beside hers, his mouth at her ear.

ANTONIO
My angel.

MARIA
Don't look down.

Before he can stop himself, he's opened his eyes--and is looking down, past her head--

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

--at himself strapped, spread eagle, across the closed pit doors.

CUT TO

EXT. MEADOW--DAY

He gasps in frightful surprise. She cries--

MARIA
No!!

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

ZOOM down a long metal shaft, past a broad silver crescent, into Antonio's frightened eyes.

He looks up, awake, and sees, at a severe angle, a shaft hanging from a hook in the ceiling, from a painting of Father Time, flickering in torchlight. This is odd, but odder still is what hangs on the bottom of the shaft, a wide, thin, ornamented--well, it looks like a crescent, a metal half-moon.

He hears something near his head. A rat, sniffing at him.

ANTONIO
Shoo!

It scurries away. He finds that he is The disembodied voice ECHOES through the room.

TORQUEMADA (VO)
Congratulations. No one ever escaped from the pit before.

The voice starts to LAUGH.

ANTONIO
Where are you? Where's my wife?

The laughter stops at this last question.

A clanging, scraping metallic SOUND grates in the air. A shape leans into view high above. It is Torquemada looking down on him. He holds a blood-stained kerchief in front of his mouth.

TORQUEMADA
She's dead.

ANTONIO
You lie!

TORQUEMADA
Dead and buried. As you will be.

He pulls a large handle beside him.

With a CREAK and a GROAN, the shaft and its half-moon start to move, slowly, in one direction--

TORQUEMADA (cont)
You shall christen my newest device--with your blood.

--then the other, swinging, slowly, back and forth.

Torquemada's laughter rises. The pendulum is starting to swing further, faster. It makes a HISS as it passes through its arc.

He hears scurrying, and now there is a group of shining eyes in the dark around him. Rats. More sniff at his feet. One runs across his chest.

The crescent WHISTLES through the air now, swinging wider and wider, faster and faster--and closer. It is descending, too.

Antonio is starting to worry because he has started to figure it out: the ornamented crescent is a blade, and with each pass it comes nearer.

TORQUEMADA'S POV--The blade cuts a beautiful curve in the air, lowering toward Antonio. We hear it WHISTLE. The thrill makes Torquemada laugh.

The pendulum swings through a mighty arc, now, and is getting perilously low. The repetitious WHISTLING is awful as it grows louder. And he can hear Torquemada LAUGHING.

The blade ROARS by, two feet above him. He screams:

ANTONIO (cont)
Maria-a-a!!!

The blade recedes up its arc, away from him. Yet a sharp pain cuts into his foot. He raises his head, looks down.

A rat bites his toe. Blood pours down his foot, onto the rope that ties it down. Another rat bites the rope where the blood runs, chewing it, wildly. Another rat runs up his leg, then hops off.

Across his view down his body, the full width of the pendulum blade THUNDERS, eighteen inches from his chest. The breeze from its passing blows his hair across his brow.

He lays his head back down, flat on its side, gulping for air, sweat beaded over his face.

He looks down his arm--at a pack of rats sniffing his fingers.

He gets a desperate longshot idea. He purses his lips and makes little friendly kissing noises, trying to attract the rats, moving his fingers, just a little, trying to lure them.

Several rats move toward his face, sniff at his nose, lips.

ANTONIO (cont)
No, you stupid rats! My hands!

He can hear, but does not watch the pendulum swing past, a foot over his form. In fact, he closes his eyes as it passes.

Torquemada watches with an intense, almost mad stare. He drops the kerchief away from his bloody mouth and mumbles to himself.

TORQUEMADA
Yes--yes, perfect--perfect.

A pain opens Antonio's eyes.

The rats bite at his feet, but also at the bindings, chewing them almost through.

A rat crawls up his shoulder, right by his face, onto his chest. It looks him in the face.

ANTONIO (cont)
Get off me!

It simply, calmly, sits back and up on its haunches. The WHISTLING gets louder, until the rat flies off his chest--hacked in half by blade, six inches above Antonio. Blood splatters across his face.

Torquemada laughs, and it resounds against the ECHOING iron walls.

One half of the rat flies against the iron wall.

The other half lands near Antonio's hand. He sees his last chance. He stretches his fingers, and just manages to grip the rat-half's tail. He pulls it toward him, grabs the blood-and-guts-filled half-carcass and rubs it on the rope tying his hand down.

CUT TO

INT. GALLERY--NIGHT

Amid the turning, GRINDING gears, huge and small, at the railing stands Torquemada, laughing, almost mad with anticipation of his greatest triumph, which will redeem him from his recent weakness.

MENDOZA (OS)
Savior!

Torquemada turns to see Mendoza having entered the gallery.

TORQUEMADA
What are you doing here? Go torture the heretics.

MENDOZA
The woman was innocent. You murdered her.

TORQUEMADA
That is not your concern.

Mendoza steps forward, toward him.

MENDOZA
I won't let you murder the husband.

He turns and grabs the lever to stop the pendulum.

Torquemada, challenged, charges him.

TORQUEMADA
No!

He knocks Mendoza back against a bank of gears. Mendoza's hair is caught in the gears, and tears by the roots from his head.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio, rubbing rat carcass on his bindings, looks up and sees the blade stopping in its arc. It starts back down.

The rats tear at the rope around his wrist--and at his blood-covered hand.

He grimaces at the pain.

The blade falls toward him--the rats attack his hand--his foot.

The razor-sharp crescent blade cuts through his shirt--but not his chest.

CUT TO

INT. GALLERY--NIGHT

Mendoza, blood running down his face from the scalp wound, forces Torquemada back, against the railing. He presses his former "savior" over the edge. The shaft of the blade swings by behind them.

Torquemada, knowing Mendoza's weakness, sticks his fingers through the hole in the torturer's hand, causing him great pain, giving the monk the upper hand. He forces Mendoza back, away from the railing.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio breathes in high-pitched wheezes. He looks over at his hand.

It is covered with rats, mad, frenzied, chewing on the ropes, and his flesh.

He grits his teeth, exerts all his strength.

He pulls his hand up, lifting several rats--and frees it.

Antonio throws his free hand across his body, pulls at the rope around his other wrist. The blade swings down behind him, at his back. He yanks at the ropes, frees his other hand--and lies back flat down.

The blade just misses his back and side and slices a neat, razor-thin gash in his chest. It opens, red, long, but not deep.

The blade past, he ignores the gash and sits up.

He sees that his legs are covered by rats. He beats them off, throwing and swatting them aside to get at the ropes.

CUT TO

INT. GALLERY--NIGHT

Torquemada and Mendoza, face to grimaced face, battle in body and will. But Mendoza's old wound is painful, and he is forced back.

TORQUEMADA
Sinner--damned, miserable sinner--

Mendoza backs near the gearworks, until his garment is caught in the teeth of the gears, pulling his arm to the shoulder into the grinding machinery. He SCREAMS as Troquemada LAUGHS.

CUT TO

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

Antonio frees his foot.

The blade is swinging back at him.

Torquemada looks over the railing. A shock of dismay twists his features.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
No one escapes! No one!!

He pulls a lever.

The pit doors spring open--dropping Antonio through them just as the blade whisks by. It would have cut through his heart, or his side, if he hadn't fallen into the pit--

--where he hangs by the lone binding, around his bleeding foot.
Rats feasting on the foot and rope fall into the pit, down his body, past his face. The rope is almost severed. Antonio hangs by threads.

Torquemada now pushes the lever he had pulled.

The machinery near Antonio's head starts up, turning the gears, closing the saw-toothed panels.

With what's left of his strength he pulls himself up at the waist--and grabs the toothed edge of the closing panel, just as the rope gives. He hangs by the edge of the moving panel. He grunts, and groans, and raises himself--

--to see the blade speeding straight for his head.

He drops below the door, keeping hold of the edge. The doors are coming together over him. He pulls himself up through the disappearing gap--

--just getting his legs out in time as the doors slam shut--and leaping out of the way as the pendulum blade just misses.

TORQUEMADA
No-o-o-!!!

He RINGS a large bell beside him.

Antonio has barely caught his breath when the door opens and Don Carlo enters with several Guards.

They stalk him carefully because the blade still swings.

DON CARLO
Stop the machine, Father!

TORQUEMADA
When the boy is dead!

This does not make Don Carlo very happy, but he deploys his men. One attacks before the blade swings down, Don Carlo and the other staying on the other side.

Antonio grabs a rat, throws it in the Guard's face, runs and leaps at the blade.

He grabs hold of the shaft, jumps atop the blade on the flat of the crescent and swings up into the air.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Kill him, fools, or I'll have you burned!

ANTONIO'S POV: For a moment, it is like flying.

When Antonio swings down, at high speed, he leaps into one of the Guards, knocking him down. He grabs the Guard's fallen sword, stabs him with a single thrust, then turns in time to thrust under the other Guard's blade. But he is kicked in the back and knocked down on his face. He rolls over--

--to find a swordpoint in his face. Don Carlo sneers triumphantly at him.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Kill him! Kill him!

Don Carlo raises his sword for the final stroke--

--when Antonio kicks him, sending him backward, into the path of the onrushing blade--and he is cleaved in half by the pendulum. He literally splits down the middle, peeling into two perfect halves.

Antonio is horrified--but only for a moment. To get away from the horror, and to find Maria, he stumbles to his feet and runs out the door.

Torquemada is insane with rage.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
Oh God, why have you forsaken me?!

Piqued, he throws the lever all the way, then runs out of the gallery.

On the next descent, the pendulum lowers, the blade runs along the floor, throwing a brilliant trail of sparks, as with a mad, metallic "CRACK!" the shaft snaps. The blade end careens violently around the iron chamber, scattering sparks with each wild ricochet.

CUT TO

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

Antonio runs down the hall, looking for Maria. He rushes to the women's cells, checking them, calling her name.

ANTONIO
Maria! Angel, where are you?!
I know you're alive!

INT. WOMEN'S CELL #2--NIGHT

An old woman does the "Witch's Dance," sitting, holding her ankles, walking across the floor in that position.

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

He calls, and looks in another.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL #3--NIGHT

Four young girls, pre-teenage, huddle together, naked.

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

He remembers Torquemada's words.

ANTONIO (cont)
Dead and buried.

He runs down the hall.

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--NIGHT

He arrives at the crypt, looks around.

CUT TO

INT. CRYPT--NIGHT

He beats on the sarcophagus and yells.

ANTONIO
Maria!

With all his strength, he pushes on the lid. It won't budge, but he won't give up. In the extemity of his necessity, to save his wife, he pushes the lid--and it suddenly moves. Another push, and another and it slides off, smashing into pieces on the floor.

He looks into the opened sarcophagus. But it appears he's too late.

Torquemada enters the room with squads of Guards and musketeers.

Antonio reaches into the tomb and embraces his seemingly lifeless wife.

ANTONIO
She was innocent. And you knew it.

TORQUEMADA
I was innocent. We were matched;
God wanted us together.

ANTONIO
She's my wife, monk. You can't have her,
even in death.

TORQUEMADA
Then you must join her.

He gestures to the ranks around him and they raise their swords and muskets, all trained on Antonio.

Suddenly, yet slowly, like a vision, Maria rises out of the tomb.

The Guards and musketeers, shocked, believing they are in the presence of a miracle, lift their weapons and fall in awe to their knees.

GUARDS
A miracle--a miracle--

Torquemada is shocked, stricken with fear, guilt and wonder.

TORQUEMADA
No--no, please--I'm sorry--

Antonio looks up to see Maria standing in the sarcophagus. A smile of weeping, transcendent joy blooms in his face.

Maria is stately, powerful. She slowly raises an arm, a finger pointing at the monk.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
I didn't mean to kill you--I wanted you--

Her pointing finger and accusing face follow him as he slinks back, as he remembers Esmerelda's last words to him.

TORQUEMADA (cont)
It's the hag's curse--

Torquemada stumbles back in fear. The dead are rising against him; those he tortured and killed are coming back for revenge. Or he is going mad. Screaming, he runs from the crypt.

CUT TO

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER--NIGHT

He stumbles to rest in the torture chamber, trying to regain control of himself. Then he hears MUSIC, a lute being played, beautifully.

When he looks up, he sees a horrible sight-- the laughing jester, who holds up his hands, the bloody fingers falling limp, like the empty fingers of a glove. Yet he is laughing, walking toward Torquemada.

The monk backs away, turns--and sees, crawling out of the hearthfire a black, charred arm, followed by a body, the burnt, withered carcass of Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA
May you die by your own tortures--

Her voice is raspy, weak, but growing in strength. Torquemada crawls back, away from this new, frightful apparition.

TORQUEMADA
Leave me alone, witch.

Esmerelda's scorched, fallen form starts to rise, to stand, to walk toward him.

ESMERELDA
--at the hands of all the innocent souls you tortured and killed.

TORQUEMADA
No-o-o!

He falls back, terrified--and runs.

INT. WINE CELLAR--NIGHT

He enters the cellar, hears them scrambling down the hall behind him. He backs past the casks, large and small--until behind him, the wall bulges, the stones coming loose, being pushed out. They fall--revealing the Cardinal, his face mad with fury. He pulls the chains free, and steps out of the wall to chase the terrified Torquemada, who flees.

INT. TORQUEMADA'S ROOM--NIGHT

He rushes into his room, panting. He presses the panel in the altar, moves the table, opens the door to the secret room--

--but in it is the Countess d'Alba Molina, wearing her jeweled rosary, her neck broken, twisted, her head at a sickening angle to her body.

He retreats, grabs the hourglass from his table and throws it at her.

It smashes against the wall, and from the dust forms the skeletal body of the Duke d'Alba Molina.

Screaming now, the monk heads, panicked, into the hall.

INT. DUNGEON HALL--NIGHT

He runs for his life, for his soul, down the hall. The ghosts who chase him are joined by several, then many others: Cesar, the Englishman, the scholar, many we haven't seen before--a monk, a nun, a beggar, a soldier, a cross section of Spanish life, a mob of apparitions.

He retreats, clearly mad, down the hall, through the small door--

INT. IRON ROOM--NIGHT

--into the iron room, over the broken blade of the pendulum, onto the grotesque painted picture of the monstrous mouth of hell.

The visions encircle him, with Maria and Antonio. He whimpers pitifully.

TORQUEMADA
Have mercy--have mercy--

The pit doors spring open, and Torquemada falls screaming into the pit.

One by one, then in groups, the visions disperse, the apparitions dissolve, leaving Maria and Antonio, who steps to the edge, looks down. Then he looks up at the gallery--

--where Mendoza, pain in his normally stoic face, looks down.

The pit doors start to close. Torquemada's screams are terrible, pitiful. The doors close inexorably, until the saw-teeth meet, the horrible face is whole, the screams are extinguished.

Mendoza, a whole side of his body mangled and crushed, loses control and fall over the railing.

He hits the Iron Room floor with a nauseating "THUD."

Antonio and Maria go to him. She kneels, taking his remaining good hand.

MENDOZA
Forgive me.

She makes the sign of the cross over his wounded palm, which he closes around her hand--before he dies.

Antonio lifts Maria and embraces her.

ANTONIO
Thank God you're safe!

He looks in her eyes.

ANTONIO (cont)
I love you.

She can't answer. She lowers her head between them, downcast, saddened. He raises it with his hand, looks in her eyes.

ANTONIO (cont)
You called me, and I came.

Quivering, she turns away, tears in her eyes.

FRANCESCO (VO)
She can't answer.

Joining them is Francesco. He looks in her teary gaze.

FRANCESCO (cont)
He took her tongue.

He kneels to her, his head bowed low.

Antonio can't understand. He looks wondrously at Maria.

ANTONIO
But I heard you.

She speaks in his mind.

MARIA (VO)
I love you.

He understands from her eyes that she is speaking to him; he doesn't know how, but she is. She takes his hand and leads him out.

INT. DUNGEON HALL--DAWN

They pass down the hall, past the cells, through a crowd of Guards, musketeers, Dr. Huesos, Gomez and Francesco. They all part to let her pass, crossing themselves, all kneeling, as she passes. several brave ones kiss the hem of her gown as she passes.

They walk up to the Plaza Gate, followed by the adoring throng. Francesco nods to the Guards, who open the gate and let them pass--

--out into the smoky, streaming sunlight, tinted with dawn.

They walk into the plaza, away from the castle, hand in hand. Slowly, the Guards close the large Gates, leaving us inside, in darkness.

FIN